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HIGH SCHOOL DAYS  
IN HARBORTOWN



## ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM DRAWINGS BY H. C. IRELAND

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# HIGH SCHOOL DAYS

IN

## HARBORTOWN

### CHAPTER FIRST



ON'T forget that it is S. I. night and the last one of the season," said Anna Arnold, one of a group of four High School girls on their way home from school.

"Do you think there is any danger of our forgetting it?" answered Mary Mason. "I, for one, am not so overrun with engagements that I can overlook the best of all, even if it does come only once a fortnight."

"I don't believe we shall have a very good time to-night," said Kate Lawson, looking back, as she spoke, to assure herself

that the group of girls just behind did not hear what she said. "You know it meets at Sue Scudder's."

"What has that to do with our having a good time?" asked Anna Arnold, quickly. "The same boys and girls will be there who always go."

"Why, you know what a mite of a house they have, and a parlor hardly big enough to swing a cat in. What fun is there in dancing if you can't have any room?"

"I do like the old-fashioned Virginia Reel," said Hattie Haynes, who had not spoken before, "and you know we always wind up with that or the Portland Fancy. Of course we can't have it at the Scudders'. It would be ridiculous."

"I've a great mind not to go at all," said Kate. "The best thing, in my opinion, that we could do, would be to stay away and let the others have our places."

"I don't care to go, I am sure," said Mary Mason. "I am engaged for ever so

many dances, though, but if you can't dance them, what is the fun?"

"Mrs. Scudder never comes into the room when Sue has company, they say," said Kate Lawson. "She works and gets everything ready, and then stays out in the kitchen and washes dishes after they are through."

"She is real common in her ways," said Hattie Haynes. "Why, she wears an apron around the house, just like a servant."

"Why should n't she?" said Anna Arnold. "She has to do all the work, while Sue is in the parlor entertaining her guests. I didn't know there was any disgrace in being poor."

"I don't suppose there is," replied Hattie, "but she is so different from the mothers of the rest of our set, that Sue likes to keep her out of the way. I am sure I don't blame her."

"I think it is outrageous to talk that way about Mrs. Scudder," exclaimed Anna, warmly. "You all of you know what a

good, kind woman she is, and how people always go to her when they have sickness or any trouble."

"I was n't saying anything against her *character*," said Hattie. "I was only referring to her manners. You know yourself, Anna, that she has very provincial ways, and shows plainly that she has never been in society."

"Society!" repeated Anna, scornfully. "I wish some of the people who have what are called society manners had a little of Mrs. Scudder's kind feelings. These manners are often skin-deep, but Mrs. Scudder has a big, warm heart. I can tell you, girls, I have n't forgotten the way she came to me when my grandmother was sick with lung-fever and mother away. I shall never forget it as long as I live, never!" and Anna's honest blue eyes were moist as she spoke.

"Well, I suppose we had better go to-night, on Sue's account," said Mary Mason. "It would mortify her if we all stayed away."

"I should think it ought to mortify her more to have you slight her poor mother the way you do," retorted Anna.

"Sue is real good company and I like her," said Kate Lawson.

"Girls," called out one from the group behind, "be sure and come to the S. I. dance to-night."

"Of course we'll go," replied Hattie Haynes; "we were just talking about it," as she threw a mischievous glance at her companions.

Anna Arnold was the first to leave the group, and as soon as she had turned in at the gate of the fine place where she lived and was beyond hearing, Kate Lawson exclaimed,—

"Isn't that just like Anna Arnold, standing up for Mrs. Scudder so! She always does for everybody she thinks is abused."

"I don't know as it is a very bad habit," replied Mary Mason; "there was a good deal of truth in what she said, after all."

"Well, I did n't say anything *bad* about

Mrs. Scudder," said Hattie. "I merely remarked that she was provincial and not used to society, that was all."

"Yes, that was all," echoed Kate Lawson. "We didn't say anything *against* her, and for my part I pity Sue. Why, if my mother went around with an apron on, and talked as countrified as Mrs. Scudder, I should want to keep her out of the way, so that the other girls would n't make fun of her."

"So should I," replied Hattie.

"We must go, of course," continued Hattie, "or Sue would feel dreadfully hurt. Besides, if we can't have a good time dancing, they will have a real nice spread. Mrs. Scudder makes delicious cake. She sells it too," she added in a lower tone, that the group behind might not hear, "but Sue would be awfully mortified if people knew it. She takes it to the city and sells it to the Industrial Union. Anna Arnold knows it, because her mother is president of the Society, and Mrs. Scudder makes all of Mrs. Arnold's preserves for her. Anna is a queer girl."

"I know she's got a real good heart, but there's no denying that she is odd," said Kate.

"She's the most amiable of all the girls," said Mary, "and she looks so sweet you'd think she couldn't say 'boo to a goose ;' but just say something against somebody she likes and you'll find out she can."

The girls separated as their different homes were reached, and Sue Scudder, who lived farther from the school than any of the other girls, was left to continue her way alone. She was a handsome girl, with dark eyes and hair and a bright color in her cheeks, and she carried her head very high, which gave her the reputation among her companions of being "proud." When she was younger, as she went to and from school, it was a common occurrence to have the boys call out "Proud cat!" The boys were older now, and had learned better manners ; and as Sue was a bright and entertaining companion, they did not object to the way in which she carried her pretty head.

Sue's face often wore a discontented expression, but to-day she looked very happy, and she smiled to herself as she walked, for all of the boys and girls had promised to come to her dance that evening, and it was gratifying to her pride to know that she could do things just as the rest did. She soon turned in at a low gate and walked up the narrow path that led to a small white house. She tried the front door, but it was locked, and with an exclamation of vexation she crossed the grass-plot and went around to the back door. As she opened the outside door and stepped into the narrow passageway, through the kitchen door came the fragrant odor of freshly baked cake, and, in the act of taking from the oven a pan of biscuits, was a stout, elderly woman, with gray hair and a kind, motherly face. As she caught sight of Sue, she broke into a smile and said, —

“The cake is all done, and I’ve only one more pan of biscuits to bake. I do hope I’ve provided enough. I should be mortified to death to fall short.”

"I think there's no danger of that," said Sue, as she looked at the loaves of cake standing on the pantry shelves, the door of which stood open.

"Now sit right down and eat your dinner, Sue," said her mother, as she lifted a covered plate from the top of the teakettle and set it on the table. "It isn't much of a dinner, but I managed to fix up something. I knew you would n't mind, knowing how busy I was."

"I'm so hungry I could eat almost anything," replied Sue, seating herself at the table and begining to eat with great velocity. "I'll fix up the parlor and chambers as soon as I'm through."

"I swept them thoroughly this forenoon, before I began on my baking," said Mrs. Scudder, as she placed her last pan of biscuits in the oven, and then seated herself in a chair with a weary air.

It did not occur to Sue, as her healthy young appetite enjoyed the dinner saved for her, that her mother looked tired and hot,

nor did she think of the many hours spent in sweeping the rooms and baking the cake for the expected guests.

“Try my cream biscuits, Sue, and see if they are good; it appears to me they are a little mite heavy,” said Mrs. Scudder, setting some biscuits before Sue.

They were small and baked to a turn, and as Sue broke one of them open, it divided into three delicate layers, white and light as cotton wool.

“They are just lovely, mother,” said Sue, brightly; “you do make the nicest biscuits of anybody I know. You ought to have seen the ones they had when the S. I.’s met at George Graham’s. They were heavy and twice the size of these. George said he wouldn’t dare to throw one at the wall for fear of demolishing it, but that he would risk the biscuit. These are just the size they always have at Anna Arnold’s, and Mrs. Arnold has everything real stylish, you know.”

“I’m glad they are all right,” said Mrs.

Scudder, with a beaming face, "for I done my best to have 'em so."

Sue gave a sigh as she went out of the room. "I don't see why mother always says *done* when I have told her so many times she ought to say *did*," she said to herself in a vexed tone.

The parlor was a small room, and it never looked so small to Sue as it did this day. "Not room for more than two couples to dance comfortably in," she said to herself, with a very discontented look on her face that was so pretty when she looked happy. "I almost wish I hadn't said I'd have the S. I.'s here. However, it's too late now, and I may as well make the best of it."

The furniture was of small dimensions and hard and stiff. "I declare I don't believe there are any springs at all in the thing," she exclaimed, as she flounced violently down upon the sofa. It was covered with a very set pattern of cotton velvet that presented as unyielding a look to the eye as the springs did to the person. Tidies of vari-

ous kinds were placed on the backs of the sofa and chairs, and coarse lace curtains hung before the windows.

“Well, it’s of no use complaining about things,” said Sue to herself, “but it is dreadful to be so poor. I’ll see if I can get a few jonquils to put in the vases; they will brighten up things a little.”

She ran out into the garden, where the round beds of jonquils and narcissi were in full bloom. Mrs. Scudder was a great lover of flowers, and there was no season of the year, when flowers bloomed at all, that some were not to be found in her garden.

Sue usually kept a vase of these lovely blossoms in the parlor, but these had all been reserved to adorn the rooms for this dance, the last one of the season. Mrs. Scudder understood so well how to make her plants bloom, that it was a common saying among her acquaintances that Mrs. Scudder had only to stick a branch in the ground and it would grow. As the rich,

bright blossoms arose from their stiff leaves in luxuriant profusion and nodded their delicate heads toward her, the flower language that all lovers of the beautiful understand spoke to the girl's heart and raised her despondent spirits. "At any rate, we'll have as handsome flowers as any of them have had," she said, as she began picking the blossoms with a plentiful supply of their blue green foliage to set them off.

A large bush of Forsythia in full bloom grew on one side of the door, and Sue broke off long feathery branches of the bright yellow flowers to help ornament the little parlor. It is the only flower that bears the name of the celebrated botanist Forsyth, and it seems as if it exerted itself to the utmost to perpetuate his memory, for its long slender branches bloom without showing a single green leaf.

Several times Sue went between the house and garden, until her decorations were complete, and then she took a critical survey of the whole. With bunches of bright flowers

placed here and there, and the curtains tied back with fresh white ribbons, the parlor did certainly look quite pretty.

Opposite the parlor was another room quite as small, that Sue always spoke of as "the library." A little writing-desk was in one corner, and a bookcase in another, and it was here Sue studied her lessons. The few articles of furniture it contained were placed against the wall in order to leave the floor clear for dancing, and the flowers and green foliage brightened the little room wonderfully.

The dining-room was very small indeed,—so tiny that with an extension leaf in the table there was not much room to spare.

"The girls can sit around in the parlor and on the stairs," said Sue to herself, "and the boys can bring out the things to them."

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Mrs. Scudder from the parlor. "You're real tasty, Sue! It looks as pretty as a picture."

"It looks well enough, what there is of it," replied Sue, "but I don't know how they'll

manage to dance much. When they all get here, there will be very little room left for dancing."

"Well, they 've had a good deal of dancing this season," said Mrs. Scudder, cheerfully, "and I don't believe they 'll mind it a mite. When a lot of young folks get together, they always manage to have a good time. One thing, they 'll have plenty to eat, and I guess it 'll taste good to 'em, too, if I do say it. You look tired, Sue ; you 'd better go upstairs and take a nap before supper. I 'll set the table, and you can cast your eye over it and see if it 's right. I ain't much when it comes to style."

"I should think *you* were the one to rest," said Sue, touched at her mother's thoughtfulness. Sue had a good heart, but her pride and over-sensitiveness often concealed it. "I have done nothing to tire me ; it is you who have done all the work."

"Lor ! I 'm not tired," replied Mrs. Scudder, cheerfully, "it 's nothing for me, for I 'm used to working. Growing girls, though, can't

stand as much as older folks can, and they ought to have plenty of rest."

In spite of her words, though, Sue was sure her mother *was* tired, for there was more of a droop than usual to the broad shoulders, and a tired look under the pleasant blue eyes. Sue, in common with those of her temperament, was subject to fits of self-reproach, and one of these now took possession of her.

"Now, mother, you go right upstairs and lie down till I call you," said Sue, decidedly, putting her hands on her mother's shoulders and starting her in the direction of the stairs; "there is nothing now but what I can do. If I were not such a selfish animal, I should n't have allowed you to do so much."

"There ain't any need to call yourself names, Sue," said Mrs. Scudder, gently; "you have enough to do with your school and your practising, and I'm so used to work it comes easy to me."

It did not come so easy to her, though, but that it had rounded her strong shoulders and whitened her hair before its time, and Sue

marked these things and the weary way in which her mother toiled upstairs.

“She never used to take hold of the banister when she went upstairs,” said Sue to herself. “What a selfish girl I am to let her work so hard! I just hate myself for it. You great selfish pig, you!” These last words were addressed to the face reflected in the little mirror that hung on the dining-room wall, and the words were accompanied by a screw of the lips that was intended to express great contempt for the pretty face reflected.

“How strange it is,” continued Sue to herself, “that when I love mother so, and know how respected she is by every one, I feel ashamed when she uses bad grammar and countrified expressions! She is a thousand million times better than I am, and I ought to be ashamed of myself; but I can’t help having the feeling that people will make fun of her. I’d like to catch them at it! I *will* try not to do it any more. I will, I will, I *will!*”

Sue had made this resolution many

times and many times broken it, but she had never realized until now that hard work and deprivations were beginning to tell on her mother's strong constitution, and this put her in a very soft mood.

She was very capable, and, after once more apostrophizing herself in the glass as a "selfish, hateful pig," she set to work vigorously to arrange the table.

Mrs. Scudder had finished her preparations, and left nothing to be done until the time came to make the coffee and bake the scalloped oysters. The oysters were prepared and set away on the pantry shelf, each dish with little dabs of butter sprinkled over the top layer of crumbs and presenting a very inviting appearance.

Sue brought the best china, and when her preparations were completed and a vase of flowers placed in the centre of the table with feathery sprays of the asparagus fern that grew in the kitchen window trailing from it, Sue was quite satisfied with her work. By the time this was done it was

almost dark, and making a cup of tea and some dry buttered toast, she placed them on the kitchen table before she called her mother.

“Well, I don’t know when I’ve slept in the daytime before,” said Mrs. Scudder, as she entered the kitchen. “You’d ought to have called me sooner, Sue, for you’d better have some tea before the company comes. Well, I never!” she exclaimed, as she caught sight of the tea and buttered toast, “what a thoughtful girl you are, Sue!”

## CHAPTER SECOND



AFTER Mrs. Scudder and her daughter had finished their simple tea, Sue washed the dishes and put them away, while her mother busied herself in preparations for the coming spread. Then Sue gave a few finishing touches to the table, so eager was she to make the most of the simple table furnishings. The arrangement of dishes was changed over and over again until at last Sue exclaimed decidedly,—

“I shall not do a single thing more to that table! Every time I touch it it looks worse than it did before.”

“I think it looks real pretty,” said Mrs. Scudder, stopping at the open door with a dish of oysters that she was about to put

into the oven. "I don't see how you could improve on it, Sue."

"You should have seen the table when the S. I.'s met at Anna's," replied Sue. "Such exquisite glass and china as they have, and solid silver candelabras with pink silk shades over the candles! Our kerosene lamp will look pretty mean after them!"

"Of course we are not expected to have such nice things as the Arnolds," replied Mrs. Scudder mildly, "but we'll give the young folks the best we've got, and trust to their young spirits for the rest."

"Hateful old thing!" exclaimed Sue, angrily, giving a twitch to the modest silk shade of the lamp that adorned the centre of the table. "It doesn't give light enough to see across the room."

"You might light the candles that are on the mantel-shelf," suggested Mrs. Scudder.

"Those hideous old-fashioned things!" exclaimed Sue. "Why, the girls would make all manner of fun of them!"

"I don't believe they'd think anything

about 'em," replied Mrs. Scudder. "They come to have a good time together, and not to see handsome things."

"You don't know the girls as well as I do," said Sue. "There isn't a thing out of style that they will not see. They have eyes like hawks."

"Now I don't believe that Anna Arnold will cast around to see what is out of the way. She will have just as good a time as if everything was just as nice as she has at home."

"Perhaps Anna will not, but the others are not like her. You don't know, mother, how bad they make me feel sometimes, by contrasting my circumstances with theirs."

"Now I wouldn't dwell on such things if I were you, dear. You will spoil your evening if you do. Perhaps the girls don't mean as bad as you think they do. You see your mind is so full of our poverty that you sometimes give them credit for your own thoughts. Young people are often unkind just from thoughtlessness."

Sue did not reply, but she felt the force of her mother's words. She ran upstairs to dress, for it was later than she had realized. There was no delay in making a choice of dresses. The gray cashmere that was her best spring dress served for all occasions. The only variety lay in a change of the ribbons she wore with it. After it was on and a pretty pink bow at her throat, Sue presented a very neat and trim appearance.

Then she ran downstairs to light the lamps in the rooms below, for the young people of Harbortown kept early hours. This was just accomplished when her ear caught the sound of voices in the distance,— voices as of many talking at once and peals of merry laughter. The members of the S. I. Society (Social Improvement Society) always went in a body to their meetings, calling on their way at the houses where the different members resided.

The little procession was headed by a bull-terrier, who had a solemn dignified air, as if the responsibility of the whole party devolved

on him. Sue was at the door as the party came up the walk.

“I am very glad to see you,” said Sue with a beaming smile, all traces of her recent unhappy mood disappearing at sight of the happy young faces before her. As she spoke she stooped and gave the bull-dog a hug. He had escorted his charges safely to the door and had then retreated to one side of the path. He responded to the hug with a slight wag of his stumpy tail and a gratified expression in his good-natured brown eyes.

“Do let him come in, George, just this time, as it is the last meeting of the season.”

“He couldn’t possibly take the time,” replied George Graham, a tall, manly boy with a face that evinced a merry temperament. “You have too much business on hand to waste it here, have n’t you, Goggles?”

The dog wagged his tail in reply, and deliberately trotted down the path in the direction from which the party had appeared.

“You ’ll be on hand at ten, old boy ?” called out his young master. The dog turned

his head around and wagged his tail in reply, then passed through the gate, and settling into a business-like trot, disappeared in the gathering darkness.

"I believe that dog knows everything you say to him," said Sue.

"Of course he does," replied George; "why should n't he?"

"Why do you call him by that ridiculous name of Goggles?" asked one of the girls.

"On account of the block patches around his eyes that make him look as if he had on goggles. Now he'll go home and attend to a few duties there and be on hand at ten o'clock to escort us home."

"Come in," said Sue, "and leave your wraps upstairs. Ladies to the right, gentlemen to the left."

They ran lightly up the narrow staircase, laughing and chatting as they went; and as the gay voices floated down to Sue, waiting in the little parlor, the cheerful sounds infused some of their gayety to her heart, and inspired her with the feeling that after

all her misgivings the evening would be a success, in spite of the small rooms and plain surroundings. She sat down at the old-fashioned jingling square piano, and played a few bars of a spirited waltz, and the inspiring sounds soon brought down the guests, who were eager to lose no more time than was necessary at this, the last dance of the season.

“Gentlemen, please take partners for a waltz,” called out Sue, as she kept on playing. “I spoke to you all when you came in, so you can dispense with the usual formalities. Time is short, and the rooms small.”

It was astonishing how quickly the dancers caught the spirit, for hardly were the words out of Sue’s lips before several couples were on the floor. Anna Arnold went up behind Sue, and lifting her off the music-stool, seated herself, saying, —

“I’m going to play this dance, I beg you to understand.”

Before Sue had time to know what had happened she found herself dancing with

Anna's brother Harry, while Anna continued the music with hardly a break.

When the dance was ended Sue came back to the piano happy and breathless, to claim her seat; but Anna grasped the piano firmly with both hands, saying,—

“I've always understood that possession was nine points of the law, so I mean to hold the fort (the piano-forte, I mean) if it takes me all summer.”

“The idea of my dancing all the evening in my own home!” exclaimed Sue.

“Gentlemen, please take partners for the two-step,” called Anna, at once beginning that dance on the rattling piano.

Sue was again forced to give in to her persistent friend, but at the end of that dance she seized the opportunity when Anna was engaged in conversation, and skilfully unseating her, took possession of the stool.

Youthful spirits are so exuberant and infectious that, notwithstanding the small quarters, the dancing progressed merrily, and long

before they suspected that it was time, Mrs. Scudder, standing smiling at the door of the little dining-room, informed Sue that the spread was ready.

The healthy young appetites of the dancers would not have made their possessors very critical, and they were ready to do justice to Mrs. Scudder's excellent cooking. The scalloped oysters, browned to a turn, were still bubbling as they were set upon the table. The flaky biscuits of exactly the approved size actually quivered with lightness as they were broken open, while the cake was such as only Mrs. Scudder could produce. She always broke her sponge cake in the old-fashioned way instead of cutting it, for she insisted that a knife made it heavy, and her fruit cake was so fruity and rich in odor that it seemed to be vying with the oysters and fragrant coffee.

"I guess the girls will have to sit in the parlor and let the boys wait on them," said Mrs. Scudder, as she looked from the group

of dancers to her small dining-room, "for our dining-room is n't any too big."

"I'm going to sit on the stairs," said Mary Mason; "it is real fun to eat there."

"And the boys can pass the plates up to us over the banisters," assented Kate Lawson.

So the girls retired to the stairs, and seated themselves comfortably, while the boys, after helping them, stood about the table and attended to their own wants.

"Now, Mrs. Scudder," said Harry Arnold, "you sit right here in this armchair and I'll bring you something good."

"No, indeed," exclaimed Mrs. Scudder, "don't you mind *me*. You just help yourself."

"What! before the ladies are served? What do you take me for?"

"Lor! I don't want anything to eat. Besides, I want to watch the table and see if any of the dishes run short. I would n't fall short for anything."

"We are too polite to eat before the ladies are served, Mrs. Scudder," said George Gra-

ham, who had approached at a signal from Harry ; "so unless you allow us to help you, we shall be obliged to go hungry. I don't know that we deserve to be punished so severely, for I, for my part, am suffering such pangs of hunger that the odor of the oysters and the sight of those biscuits drive me nearly wild. How is it with you, Harry ? "

"I will try to sustain life until I reach home, but if I should fail to find any cold bits in the pantry, may I rely on you to break the news of my early demise to my doting mother ? "

"You may, Harry," replied George, in a voice trembling with emotion, "you may rely on me. Mrs. Scudder, how can you be so flinty-hearted ? "

"You're *too* ridiculous, boys," exclaimed Mrs. Scudder, "and I suppose I shall have to give in, but I must sit where I can watch the table, so as to see if anything gives out."

"Bless you," exclaimed George, fervently, "you shall sit right here where you can keep one eye on the table and the other on us."

Both flew to fill a plate for her, and then, helping themselves liberally, stood on either side of her, eating with great enjoyment.

“When I settle down,” said Harry, “I shall not ask a girl to marry me until I find out if she can cook as well as Mrs. Scudder. That will be the test.”

“Just what I was thinking,” said George. “I consider that of the very first importance. Her character will be secondary, for I intend to form that to suit myself.”

“I guess you’d both of you better wait till you get through the High School before you begin to cast about for a wife,” said Mrs. Scudder, beaming at the compliment.

“I shall not be in a hurry,” said Harry; “I shall give them a chance to practise.”

“What a sight of spoiled victuals there will be!” exclaimed Mrs. Scudder, with her good-natured laugh.

Just then Sue appeared at the door.

“Oh, here you are!” she exclaimed to the two boys. “The girls were wondering what had become of you all this time, and Hattie

Haynes has finished her oysters and is ready for her coffee and cake, but she says as George Graham helped her she thinks it would be rude to let anybody else wait on her."

"I fly!" exclaimed George, quickly laying down his plate, "but I was so agreeably entertained here — "

"Oh, go right along to the young ladies," said Mrs. Scudder, highly pleased. "You mustn't leave the young folks so long."

"Why, Mrs. Scudder, you *are* young folks," he said, as he quickly left the room.

"The girls think it strange you stayed away so long," said Sue to Harry. "Kate Lawson has a new conundrum and she wants to see if you can guess it."

"I'll go in a minute," replied Harry. "Now, Mrs. Scudder, give me your plate, and if you do not care for any more oysters, I will give you a cup of coffee."

"You need n't wait for that," replied Sue, "mother doesn't care to be waited on. Besides, she'd better pour the coffee."

"No, indeed, Harry, don't you stop to wait on *me*," exclaimed Mrs. Scudder, going to the coffee urn. "You go right in to the parlor and stay with the girls."

"I'd rather stay with you," replied Harry.

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Mrs. Scudder, laughing.

"Don't you believe it?" asked Harry.

"Of course I don't believe it," replied Mrs. Scudder, "but you're welcome to your jokes, Harry."

"Mrs. Scudder," said Harry, seriously, "I'm not *always* joking, I can be serious sometimes. When you nursed me with the typhoid fever, I told you that there wasn't a woman except my mother that I respected and loved as I did you. Don't you believe I meant it?" and Harry placed a hand on each of Mrs. Scudder's broad shoulders and looked earnestly into her face.

"Why, of course I believe you meant it," replied Mrs. Scudder, with a beaming smile; "but it isn't necessary for you to stick in

here along of me, when the girls are all expecting you."

"You'd better be pouring out the coffee, mother," said Sue, "for the girls are waiting for it."

"I've a fine conundrum for you two boys," said Kate Lawson, as she sipped the fragrant coffee George Graham had brought her. "See if you can guess it as quick as you did the last one I told you. 'Why is—'"

"Be careful you don't put the cart before the horse, Kate, as you usually do, and give the answer instead of the question."

"I never do," replied Kate, indignantly. "I am always very careful to give it correctly and not throw any light on the answer, especially with two such bright boys as you are."

"Of course you do," said Harry. "Let me see, how was it you propounded that famous one about the man going up the river Tigris? 'Why is a man on the Tigris who is going to put his father in a bag like a man going to Bagdad?'"

"Oh, what a story!" cried Kate. "You have told it so many times, you almost believe it yourself."

"Well, what was it? See if you can say it straight now."

"I shall do no such thing, and moreover I shall not tell the one I was going to, either."

"Tell *me*, Kate," pleaded George. "There is no reason why you should punish the rest of us because Harry has maligned you. *I* knew you said it straight. 'Why is a man going to Bagdad like a man going up the river Tigris?' Now let's have the new one."

Kate made no reply, and did not enjoy the laugh that was raised at her expense, for she did not take a joke with very good grace, and for that reason was often the butt of the boys' jokes.

"I know what it is," said Hattie Haynes, "for she told me at recess to-day. 'Why is a—' No, 'What is the difference between a tree and an elephant?' It is a splendid conundrum, too."

"Something to do with a trunk, of course," said Harry.

"Nothing whatever to do with trunks," replied Kate. "You will never guess it, and I'm not going to tell you. Don't you tell them either, Hattie."

"Why, it's public property, I suppose, and if they can't guess it, why should n't they be told? The answer, boys, is, 'A tree leaves in spring and the elephant leaves when the menagerie does.' It's an old conundrum, but I think it's splendid."

"So it is," the boys asserted.

By this time they had all finished their coffee and Sue, seated at the piano, was playing a waltz with great spirit. In a moment the two small rooms were filled with gliding couples, and dance followed dance until the little clock on the parlor mantel-shelf struck ten.

"Time is up," called out George Graham, as the dance ended and the dancers fanned their flushed faces with fans or handkerchiefs. "I wonder if our escort has arrived yet."

Yes, there he is!" he added, after a survey from the window.

Those who could obtain a view from the small window, beheld a white bull-terrier with black patches around his eyes, seated silently on the doorstep, gazing serenely and pensively at the full moon that was now well up in the sky.

"Let him come in," said Sue, going to the door and inviting the visitor to enter.

The dog did not rise, but turned his good-natured eyes towards her and wagged his stump of a tail in acknowledgment of the invitation.

"Why doesn't he come in?" asked Sue, turning to George, who stood behind her.

"Ask him again," he said; "he is very sensitive, and thinks you are only asking him out of politeness."

"Come in, good fellow," said Sue, encouragingly; "we want to see you."

Still the dog did not move, but responded as before with an amiable wag of his short tail.

“The young lady really means it, old boy,” remarked George, as if he were addressing a human being; “so you’d better come in.”

The dog at once arose and walked sedately into the house, glancing about him with an expression in his kind eyes that approached as near a smile as a dog is capable of. George seated himself in an armchair, and the dog at once jumped upon his lap.

“Who asked you to sit on my best trousers?” said George. “I’m ashamed of you! Get down at once!”

The dog did not stir, but continued to regard the company with his usual benign expression.

“I thought he always minded you,” said Kate, with a little sarcastic laugh. “I don’t consider that very obedient, to take no notice of what you tell him to do.”

“He didn’t like the way I spoke to him,” replied George, and at once whispered into the dog’s ear. Immediately the dog jumped down and seated himself in front of his

master, with his back to him, according to bull-dog etiquette.

“What did you say to him?” asked Sue.

“I told him to jump down,” replied George.

“Nonsense! It is a trick you have taught him, I know. He shall have some sponge cake; I remember he likes it.”

“Be sure you offer it with your right hand, for he is very particular,” remarked George, as Sue appeared with a large piece of the cake.

“What would happen if I held it in my left hand?” asked Sue.

“Try and see.”

Sue broke off a piece of the rich yellow cake, the dog watching her meanwhile with anxious wrinkles on his expressive face, and holding it in her left hand, offered it to him. He turned his head aside, and although she actually touched his nose with the tempting morsel, he made no effort to eat it. His eyes watched every movement of her hand, though, and the instant she changed it to her other hand he snapped at it and swallowed it whole.

Others had to try the trick, and so many pieces of cake were disposed of that George interposed.

“Pray don’t give him anything more,” he said. “If he escapes with only a slight fit of apoplexy I shall be thankful. Come, Goggles, say good-night, and we’ll start for home.”

The dog at once gave two short barks and walked with dignity to the front door, before which he seated himself until the little party were ready to start. Then he preceded them down the walk to satisfy himself that no danger lurked in their path, and conducted them safely to their homes.

## CHAPTER THIRD



HE meetings of the Social Improvement Society afforded the young people of the town as much pleasure as improvement. All of the meetings were not spent in dancing; every alternate one was devoted to debates on the stirring questions of the times, or in dramatic exhibitions. In towns that constitute the suburbs of large cities, the inhabitants have to rely largely on one another for social amusements, and for this reason the young people are drawn more closely together than is possible in large cities. In this way they grow up after the manner of brothers and sisters in a large family, and the tie of companionship becomes a very close one, continuing through life, although the members

of these large human families may be scattered over different continents.

The last social gathering of the season ended with the dance at Sue Scudder's, but the season could not end without a business meeting to wind up the affairs of the Society. For that reason a meeting was called by the secretary, given by word of mouth in order to save postage stamps and stationery, to be held at the house of Harry and Anna Arnold. Accordingly, on the appointed afternoon the society assembled in the spacious library, escorted by the responsible Goggles, who, as usual on such occasions, took up his situation on the piazza, for the business meetings were not long, and he did not consider it worth his while to go home and come back again.

These business meetings were conducted according to strict parliamentary rules. The members conversed together until the tall clock in the hall chimed the hour of four. Seated at the table that stood in the centre of the room were the president of the club,

the secretary, Anna Arnold, and the treasurer, George Graham. As the chimes ceased, the chairman rapped on the table to secure silence. The hum of voices suddenly ceased and every member was seated. Then the chairman made a few remarks of welcome to the members, after which he called on the secretary to read her report. The president had a very deliberate manner of speaking that was very effective and that gave a touch of dignity to the occasion.

The secretary's report was not a lengthy one, for the business of the S. I. Society was not conducted on a large scale, and as soon as it was concluded the chairman called on the treasurer of the Society for *his* report.

"Ladies and gentlemen," began the treasurer in a dignified manner that was hardly in keeping with his mirthful countenance, "I am happy to tell you that we are struggling with a large surplus. After all the debts of the club are liquidated we have in the treasury the sum of three dollars. I should like your instructions in regard to its investment.

The sum of three dollars at compound interest would, I understand, double itself in the next twenty years, and at the same rate at the end of forty years we should possess the neat sum of twelve dollars, and by that time let us hope we shall have acquired sufficient wisdom to apply it to proper uses. May I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to ascertain the opinion of the members on this important question?"

A rap on the table from the chairman's pencil checked the laughter occasioned by the treasurer's remarks.

"The chair is ready for the question," remarked the president, in his slow utterance.

"It seems to me, Mr. Chairman," began Kate Lawson, who was often spokesman at the meetings, "that it is hardly worth our while to invest such a small sum. I think it would be better to buy something with it and divide."

"I think peanuts would give us the most for our money," remarked Mary Mason, "or that kind of candy the primary-school scholars are so fond of,—jaw-breakers."

"Three dollars' worth of peanuts," said

Harry Arnold, "would give, at ten cents a quart, thirty quarts, which would not go very far divided among twenty members. While the same sum spent in jaw-breakers at a cent apiece, would buy three hundred."

"Mr. Chairman," said Sue Scudder, "I propose that the money should be laid aside for a nest egg to start a circulating library for the Society."

"It is moved," said the chairman, "that the surplus of three dollars that we have remaining over in our treasury be applied to the purpose of starting a circulating library for the Society. Those in favor of the motion will please say aye."

A chorus of voices responded aye.

"Those contrary-minded will say no," continued the chairman.

Silence followed. "The ayes have it," said the chairman.

Here a knock was heard at the door and a note was handed in to the chairman. He broke the seal and after reading the contents remarked in his deliberate manner, —

“I have a note here which nearly concerns you all, and which with your permission I will read to you.

“TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE S. I. SOCIETY:

“DEAR SIR,—Will you extend to the officers and members of the S. I. Soc. a cordial invitation from me to pass the summer vacation in camp at my summer home at Sunset Point? The services of Goggles as sentinel are respectfully solicited. My daughter Mrs. Norton will take pleasure in acting as chaperon. Hoping for a favorable reply, I am,

“Very truly yours,

“MARY ARNOLD.”

For an instant after the reading of this note there was dead silence. Then a chorus of long-drawn Ohs arose from the girls.

“Is it your pleasure that I return a favorable answer to this invitation?” asked the chairman. “Those in favor of accepting it will say aye.”

Shouts of aye were heard on all sides.

“It is hardly necessary to put any other question,” remarked the chairman; “the ayes have it. Miss Secretary, will you kindly

write a note of acceptance to Mrs. Arnold's kind invitation? Now that the business of the day is disposed of, there remains only to adjourn the meeting, hoping we shall all meet in the autumn. Ladies and gentlemen, the meeting is adjourned."

Chairs were rapidly pushed back at these words, and a medley of voices filled the room.

"How splendid!"

"How did she ever come to think of it?"

"What things do you suppose we ought to take with us?"

Many questions of a like nature were heard from the girls, who all talked at once in their excitement. The secretary's note of acceptance was now written, and as she joined the happy group she was greeted with a volley of questions.

"How could you keep it to yourself so long?" asked Kate Lawson.

"How long have you known it?" asked another.

"Shall we live in a tent?" asked another.

"I'll tell you all I know about it," replied

Anna, as soon as there was a lull in the questions. "My mother has had a camp built in the pine grove at the Point, and we girls are to live in that, and the boys are to have a tent pitched near by."

"What clothes shall we take?" was at once asked.

"There will be no occasion for anything but shirt waists and a short skirt," replied Anna.

"I should think it would be nice to decide on a pretty design and have our suits all made alike," said Hattie Haynes.

"I've just had mine made," said one of the girls, "and I couldn't afford to have another right away."

"What does one suit more or less matter?" asked Hattie Haynes, contemptuously. "I hope we are not any of us quite so poverty-stricken as that!"

"It matters a good deal to *me*," said Sue Scudder, with a deep flush on her cheeks. "If I go I shall have to wear the same suit I wore last summer, and if any of you

are ashamed of such a 'poverty-stricken' companion, you will have to suffer the mortification."

"It makes no difference to *me*," replied Hattie, with a shrug of her shoulders. "I was only thinking of Mrs. Arnold. It seems no more than courtesy for us to present as good an appearance as we can when she has taken so much pains for our pleasure."

"I can answer for my mother," replied Anna, promptly. "She always taught me not to judge people by their clothes, and this project of hers was planned for us to have a good time. I am sure our clothing, provided it is neat and comfortable, would be the last thing she would think of."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Mary Mason, "for it seems out of place to think of fashion in a camp."

"Goggles has n't received his invitation yet," said Anna, glad to turn the conversation into another channel. "Let him come in, George, and tell him about the camp. I 'm sure he 'll understand."

The bull-terrier was accordingly brought in, and he was at once told of the pleasure in store for him.

“Tell them you will be very glad to accept the invitation, old boy,” said his master. Whereupon the dog gave a short bark.

“Oh! I nearly forgot to show you something,” exclaimed Anna Arnold, suddenly. “I’ve got a new dog. Hold Goggles tight, George, and I’ll bring him in. He seems very gentle considering his size, but I should advise you not to handle him much, for everything here is strange to him, and I should feel dreadfully to have him bite anybody.”

With these words she disappeared for a few moments; then the door opened, and in rolled a little black puppy with tan-colored ears and legs and bright black eyes. George Graham instantly assumed an expression of terror and feigned an attempt to climb up on his chair. The puppy’s roving eyes at once singled out Goggles, who was seated in front of his master’s chair.

"Do please hold Goggles, George," called Anna, anxiously. "I am afraid he will kill the puppy. I forgot what a fighter he is."

"He always takes a dog of his own size at least, but he prefers the largest they make," replied George. "He would n't touch a little dog if he were to chew him for half an hour. Watch him and see how he acts."

The puppy looked at the big dog for an instant, then with a fierce growl pounced at him with the ferocity of a lion springing on his prey. The big dog apparently did not see him, but gazed persistently before him, anywhere except at the little creature that was making short runs at him and barking in a shrill little voice. This persistent avoidance of him had an irritating effect on the excitable puppy, and he now worked himself into such a rage that his mistress caught him up in her arms and held him by main force while he raged and struggled to return to his indifferent antagonist.

"What kind of a dog do you call him?"

asked George Graham, after he had examined him silently.

“He is a thoroughbred Yorkshire,” replied Anna; “so the man I bought him of informed me.”

“Who sold him to you?”

“I don’t know his name. The last time I was in the city I saw a man standing at a street corner with two puppies for sale. One was asleep, but this one was wide awake; he seemed so confused at the sights and sounds about him that I pitied him and bought him.”

“For a Yorkshire terrier?”

“Yes. The man said they always had black hair at first, but that it would fall off by and by and long silky gray hair grow out in its place. Don’t you believe it?”

“I don’t believe such short coarse hair will change to a long silky coat, but perhaps I’m mistaken. However, he’s a bright, plucky little fellow and you’ll have ever so much fun with him.”

“I hadn’t much faith in the man’s honesty

when he told me that when he came to his growth he would be smaller than he is now. I only bought him because I pitied him, he looked so small and forlorn. I don't care if he does turn out a mongrel, he will be bright and affectionate."

"Mongrels are apt to be more intelligent than well-bred dogs," said George, "and I don't see why they haven't just as much right to exist as those who have a pedigree."

Just then a sweet-faced woman was seen coming down the wide hall staircase.

"Oh! Mrs. Arnold! How did you ever think of it!" exclaimed several voices at once, as the girls all clustered about her. "How perfectly delightful it will be!"

"I hope you will all enjoy it as much as I am sure I shall," replied Mrs. Arnold, as she tried to shake hands with all at once. "I want to have all my boys and girls together for once, and we will try to be a very amiable family."

"Why, how *could* we be anything else?"

asked Hattie Haynes. "We shall have such a good time that it would be strange if we could not be amiable."

"A whole summer is a long time for people to be thrown into close family relations," replied Mrs. Arnold, "and it will be good discipline for all of us to practise adapting ourselves to one another. I must tell you something about my plans if you will come back into the library for a few minutes."

"Are we included in your plans?" asked George Graham.

"Certainly you are," replied Mrs. Arnold, "I treat my boys and girls alike. But do put that puppy out of the room, Anna, for I can't hear myself talk when he keeps up such a snarling."

The puppy had been worrying an imaginary rat in the shape of a rubber ball, and he growled at it and shook it until any ordinary puppy would have been dizzy. When Anna, taking advantage of a momentary lull in his attacks, quickly seized

the ball, he resented the interference greatly, and at once fastened his small teeth in her gown, when, bracing his short legs and pulling valiantly, he was dragged out of the room.

Mrs. Arnold seated herself comfortably on a lounge. She was one of those women who always have a comfortable look and impart a restful influence to those about her. The girls seated themselves as near to her as possible, several drawing up hassocks close to her feet, while the boys either sat or stood on the outskirts of the circle.

“Now that we are all comfortable, we will talk over matters,” began Mrs. Arnold. “Perhaps you know from Anna that I have built a camp at the end of the Point, and you girls will occupy that. The boys will have to live in a tent near by. I shall have a man to cook for you all, and we have a separate building that will have to serve for a dining-room and amusement hall combined. Now my plan is, girls and boys, to have a

partially co-operative housekeeping,—in that way it will be a help to me and my servants, and I think you will all be happier for having regular duties at stated times. The girls can make the beds and keep the camp tidy. The boys, I am sure, will undertake a part of the family housekeeping, and go between the camp and the town on errands, for a large household, such as ours will be, requires much care from some one."

"Of course we will," was heard from the boys.

"I think it will be perfectly fine," said Hattie Haynes. "I always wanted to do some housework."

"You will have a chance to do plenty of it," replied Mrs. Arnold, "but divided between so many it will be an easy task. We will be very systematic and take turns in the care of the camp and dining-hall, and the boys can take turns in their part of the work. Oh, I forgot a very important member of our party. Where is Goggles? He will have a great responsibility on his

shoulders, but he looks equal to it, does n't he?"

He did indeed look equal to the occasion, as he sat watching the party, with the deep wrinkles on his forehead more pronounced than ever and his massive jaw resolutely set.

The girls had so many points to settle that Mrs. Arnold reminded them that it was not necessary to decide everything at once, as there were still several weeks before vacation. "And don't let my plan interfere with your school work," she added, "or I shall be sorry I proposed it. Keep on with your studies as usual, for there will be plenty of time to make our arrangement after vacation begins."

It was some time before the members of the S. I. Society departed to their homes, so excited were they over the pleasure so unexpectedly thrown in their paths, and nothing else was talked of on the way.

## CHAPTER FOURTH



IME seemed never to pass so slowly as it did this spring. The subject of the summer camp was talked over in all its aspects by the girls, and the most minute details were settled. The boys thought about it just as much, but did less talking. Mrs. Arnold's advice not to neglect their studies was borne in mind, and their lessons were learned as well as usual.

One thing, however, they *could* not keep in control, or rather *did* not, for they were unconscious of it, and that was the agreeable feeling of excitement that always accompanies an anticipated pleasure in the young. As the time for vacation drew near, this feeling increased, came bubbling to the surface, and brimmed over. Girls and boys usually dignified and sedate during school

hours, seemed to undergo a complete change and laughed and communicated with one another while school was in session in a manner that threatened to overthrow the former steady discipline of the school.

In vain the teachers reprimanded and threatened, and remarked that the primary-school children could set them an example of orderly conduct. All admonitions seemed only to increase the prevailing spirit of hilarity that possessed the members of the Social Improvement Society, and unfortunately their example had the effect of demoralizing the other scholars.

As vacation time approached, the teachers were reduced nearly to the verge of nervous prostration. Many were the practical jokes perpetrated, all of a harmless nature, but interfering greatly with the discipline of the school. In all of these the prime mover was either George Graham or his intimate Harry Arnold, aided and abetted by the other pupils. When not too flagrant, these misdemeanors were wisely ignored, and due

allowance was made for the exuberant spirits of youth. Some, however, were of so pronounced a character that they could not be ignored.

One day a dog that strayed into the school-house yard just before school opened, was secreted in a large closet where the teacher hung his hat. The moment he opened the door out bounced the dog, whose sudden appearance caused the teacher to jump back with as much alacrity as the dog did.

“Graham, be kind enough to put this dog out,” the teacher ordered, divining at once the originator of the plot; and after school Graham had an opportunity to make his apology.

After a short interval of peace there was another surprise in store for the teacher and most of the pupils.

Directly opposite the seat occupied by George Graham was a window at which the sun entered at about noon, and it was his custom at that hour to draw down the shade. This was an established custom with him,

and he always did it without being requested by the teachers.

One day the sun appeared as usual and shone directly into the room, but for once George made no motion to rise and draw the shade. The pupils across whose desks the rays fell looked inquiringly at George, but he was so engrossed in study that their glances made no impression on him. The teacher at his desk on the platform was busy in examining Latin exercises, and was not aware of the state of affairs until one of the girls asked if the curtain could not be lowered.

“Graham, please draw down that shade,” said the teacher.

“Certainly, sir,” replied George with alacrity, stepping to the window.

Down went the shade, and to the surprise of all there appeared fastened to it a large picture of a baby sitting in a bathtub with a cake of soap floating in it.

First a rustle passed along the line of desks, followed by an uncontrollable burst

of merriment. Even the sedate teacher had to bend his head over the pile of exercise books that lay before him in order to conceal the twitching of his lips.

Such a breach of discipline could not, of course, pass unrecognized, and the matter was with much difficulty sifted to the bottom.

George Graham this time was not in it, his strong point being that he was told by the teacher to draw down the shade. He had been purposely left out of the plot. It was conjectured, however, that the idea originated with him.

This state of excitement did not confine itself to whispering and interchanges of signals and practical jokes, but at last took the form of note throwing. This was accomplished with such adroitness that it was impossible for the teachers to detect whence came the little white missives they sometimes saw flying through the air. These were always confiscated when detected, and were ignominiously consigned to the wastepaper basket, but every teacher knew

that where one was seized several reached their destination in safety. At last the head-teacher announced sternly that the very next time a boy or girl was detected in throwing a note, he or she would be expelled from the school.

For a few days the deportment of the school was greatly improved and the teachers began to relax their watchfulness, but gradually the bolder members of the S. I.'s began to assert themselves, and the teachers soon became aware that the note-throwing was resumed in full force. The boys excelled in this accomplishment, and in fact were the principal factors in the movement, but several of the girls had become quite proficient.

One day the climax came. The air was warm and balmy, and the soft breezes that came in through the open windows and the songs of the birds in the trees in the school-house yard seemed to have an exciting effect on the restless spirits confined in the school-house. Several times during the fore-

noon the head-teacher's watchful ears caught the sound of the rattling of paper, and looked up in time to catch a glimpse of hastily assumed attitudes and heads bent studiously over books with such grave countenances that his suspicions were completely verified.

Hattie Haynes was suddenly seized with a desire to address a few words to a girl friend seated at a desk a short distance in front. The note was hastily written, folded into a three-cornered missive, and her arm raised to send it on its way, when a suspicious rustling sound fell on the teacher's ears. Hattie, thinking herself about to be detected, lost her presence of mind and hastily dropped the note, which fluttered to the feet of Alan Leigh, who sat at a desk across the aisle. Alan, whose whole attention had been given to the book that lay on his desk, started at Hattie's sudden movement, and it was at that moment that the teacher looked up. Seeing Alan's start of surprise and the note lying at his feet, he at once concluded that Alan was about

to throw the note and had dropped it when he found himself detected.

"You all of you remember," said the teacher, sternly, "that I said I should make an example of the first instance of this kind. You can consider yourself dismissed from the school, Leigh."

For an instant there was the consternation that such an announcement would naturally produce; then a murmur and rustle were heard from the girls' side, for most of them knew who had thrown the note.

Hattie Haynes was the only one who did not join in the commotion. She sat looking down at her book, rather paler than usual, but steadily avoiding the indignant eyes directed toward her.

Alan Leigh was a broad-shouldered, well-built boy, with a dark olive complexion and intensely dark eyes. Now there was a hot glow on his cheeks, and his eyes looked unusually brilliant, as he quietly collected his books together and made them fast with a leather strap.

"I am greatly disappointed in you, Leigh," said the teacher, as the boy rose from his seat. "You are the last one I should have suspected of wilfully defying me."

The boy made no reply, but walked down the aisle with his head erect and an air of pride that was not natural to a pupil discharged in disgrace from school. He did not cast a glance behind him, but passed through the door for the last time, with no appearance of regret at leaving his school-mates and the place where he had spent so many hours.

He went downstairs with his books under his arm, took his hat from the peg where it hung, and started for home. He walked slowly, evidently lost in thought, and that not of a pleasant kind, for his dark brows were knitted and his eyes had an angry glow.

"I will," he at last muttered, and, turning around, walked quickly back toward the school-house. "I'll give her a chance and see if she'll take it."





On reaching the school-house he went around to the girls' entrance and rang the bell. It was answered by one of the girls who was studying her lesson in the cloak-room. She had evidently not yet heard of Alan's expulsion, for she evinced no concern at seeing him.

"Will you be kind enough to let Miss Haynes know that somebody wishes to speak with her?" he asked.

The girl disappeared, and in a few moments Hattie appeared, looking pale and apprehensive. When she saw who was at the door, a deep flush overspread her face, but she said nothing.

"I have come to return your property to you," said Alan calmly, as he held out the little three-cornered note toward her.

He kept his bright black eyes on her face as he spoke, and hers fell under their searching gaze, and her hand was not as steady as his when she held it toward him.

"Thank you," she stammered in confusion, and that was all she said.

Alan's upper lip curled into a contemptuous smile, as he turned away and walked rapidly toward home.

"I thought I took her measure correctly," he muttered to himself, "but I'm glad I gave her a chance. Now for a settlement with my father!"

Alan's home was not very far, and at his rapid gait he soon reached it. It was a large old-fashioned house, standing back from the street and so shaded by large trees that it could not be seen at all until one arrived at the steps that led up to the piazza. This piazza was supported by large columns, the roof projecting over the chamber windows in such a way that if any sunshine had penetrated the dense trees it could not have reached any of the windows of the upper story. Everything about the place looked gloomy and desolate, from the windows with their stiff white shades to the neglected flower-beds overgrown with weeds and grass.

Alan followed a path that led around the house and entered a side door. Carelessly

tossing his hat at one of a row of hooks that hung on one side of the narrow passage-way, he passed through a dining-room and into a large hall that ran through the house. There was the same appearance of discomfort and absence of taste inside that was observable outside. Within great neatness prevailed, but the well-worn furniture was set against the walls with no regard to taste or comfort, suggesting the thought that the arrangement was devised by a man whose only object was to obtain free egress to and from the different rooms.

Alan ran up the old-fashioned staircase with its white painted banisters, that was placed at one end of the hall and led to the upper story. It nearly formed a spiral, so short were the curves. He paused for an instant before a closed door at the farther end of the upper hall, braced his shoulders firmly as if to pull himself together for the coming contest, set his lips resolutely, and then gave three smart knocks on the door.

“Come in,” responded a man’s voice im-

patiently ; and Alan entered, closing the door after him.

A man with gold spectacles sat writing at a desk covered with many sheets of manuscript, who as Alan entered looked up at him from under his spectacles with just such bright dark eyes as met his from the youthful face that confronted him.

“ Well,” he said, impatient at the interruption, “ what do you want? I cannot spare you more than five minutes, for I am late as it is.”

“ I shall not require so long a time as that, father,” replied the boy, quietly. “ I came to tell you that I am expelled from school.”

“ For what ? ” asked his father, shortly.

“ For breaking rules,” replied Alan.

A sarcastic smile appeared in the elder man’s dark face as he remarked coldly,—

“ I have never anticipated any intellectual success for you, so I am not disappointed in that particular, but I was not prepared to have you dismissed in disgrace for bad conduct.”

No reply to these hard words came from his son ; he merely kept his lips firmly pressed together and waited for his father to continue.

“ May I inquire what you intend to do next ? ” asked his father, in such a sarcastic tone that the color mounted to the boy’s dark face.

“ I have n’t thought about that yet, sir, ” replied the boy, calmly.

“ Because I cannot afford either to engage a tutor for you or to send you to a boarding-school.”

“ Perhaps I can get a situation as clerk in some business, ” said the boy.

“ What house do you think would engage a clerk who has not graduated from the High School ? ” asked his father.

“ Then I can get a position as street-car conductor, ” replied Alan, quickly.

“ I doubt it very much. There is always a long waiting list, I am told. Besides, you might break the rules and be discharged.”

“ You may be sure of one thing, Father, ”

replied the boy hotly, stung by his father's hard words; "I shall not burden you one minute longer than is necessary. I am strong and well and am not afraid of work, so you may be sure I can take care of myself."

"I am glad you have such confidence in your ability; *I* haven't, I must confess. However the five minutes I allowed you are up, and I must finish my work." Whereupon he adjusted his spectacles and continued his writing.

Alan at once left the room and proceeded to his own chamber, that was situated at the opposite end of the hall. He closed the door after him with a bang, and walked up and down the room with a gloomy face and occasional angry mutterings. The chamber contained very little furniture, and that of the plainest kind. A table bare of covering stood in the middle of the room, on which were a leather writing-case and a few books. These were neatly arranged, and in one corner, suspended from the wall, was a small bookcase containing a few volumes.

"Never a kind word for me!" he exclaimed bitterly. "He might have known I had done nothing bad! What temptation could *I* have to break the rules! He knows I am as far removed from the other scholars as if I had the small-pox! He shall never learn the facts from me; I will have that much satisfaction!"

It seemed to afford him very little satisfaction so far, however, for he presented about as unhappy an appearance as any boy could. For a long time he continued his walk, then he flung himself into the chair that was placed before the table, and leaning his elbows on it, sat with his face supported by his hands, gazing abstractedly out of the window at the large trees that shut out all view of sky or country.

Alan's mother had died two years before, and since then he had lived a solitary life. His father, absorbed in his literary pursuits, gave no thought to him provided he did not disturb him in his work; and the boy, naturally reserved, losing the care and companion-

ship of an affectionate mother, was becoming taciturn and moody. With the boys he was on good terms, although he never sought them, but with the girls he was shy and reserved, often repelling their friendly advances with curt speeches and brusque ways. And yet he would have liked to be on the intimate relations with them the other boys were, if he had known how.

As he sat thus gloomily silent, a gray squirrel whose bright eyes had been watching him from a bough opposite the open window, suddenly alighted on the window-sill. For a moment he rested there, as if considering what step he had better take, then jumped lightly upon the floor and in a moment was upon the table, sitting directly in front of the silent boy, watching him earnestly.

## CHAPTER FIFTH



E must return to the school from which Alan had been dismissed in disgrace. There was silence until the last echo of his footsteps on the oaken staircase had died away. Then a rustle went through their ranks as the girls looked from one to another in contemptuous indignation. This vented itself in murmurs of "shameful" and "contemptible" that threatened to end in a public denunciation of the real culprit, until the teacher rapped on his desk and sternly demanded silence.

"You have just witnessed the dismissal of one of your companions for wilful disobedience," he said, "and a like example will be made of any one else who is guilty of the same offence. I am resolved to enforce

order, even if it necessitates expelling every pupil in the school."

The real cause of the demonstration of feeling from his pupils was unknown to the teacher, and he naturally supposed it to be called forth by the penalty imposed on Alan.

After school, however, the reckoning came. No sooner had Hattie reached the cloak-room than she was surrounded by a crowd of excited and indignant girls who expressed their sentiments without reserve.

"How could you do such a mean thing as to let Alan be expelled from school!" exclaimed one.

"And Alan of all others! There is n't any other one who would have taken the blame on his shoulders," said another.

"Of course they would n't! He could easily have said he didn't throw the note, without giving you away. I don't see how you could let him do so!" exclaimed Anna Arnold.

"He didn't give me time," said Hattie,

at last. "If Mr. Stearns had asked who threw the note, of course I should have owned up."

"I call that a pretty lame excuse," said Anna. "What was there to prevent you from confessing while Alan was packing up his books? You will never have a better chance."

"It would n't have been very easy to explain before the whole school. Of course I shall make it right with Alan."

"I don't know that it was any easier for Alan to be dismissed before the whole school than it would have been for you. What good will it do Alan to have you make it right with him? The only way you can make it right is to tell Mr. Stearns everything."

"How do you know I don't intend to do so?"

"Judging from your conduct so far, I shall be most agreeably surprised if you do."

"I don't know what business it is of yours.

I think I can manage my own affairs without any advice from any of you."

"Perhaps you can, but the way you are managing this affair does n't satisfy our ideas of honor."

"You have often twitted me with being poor, and are very fond of making invidious comparisons between your condition and mine, but I would rather be as poor as Job than be a *sneak!*!" exclaimed Sue Scudder, taking this opportunity to pay off old scores.

Many other remarks of a like nature followed, for young people have little sympathy for one of their number who plays the moral coward. The boys made no comment on the event of the morning, but their way of taking it was even harder for Hattie to bear than the open hostility of the girls. Their utter avoidance of her cut her to the quick, and she passed alone out of the school yard and walked rapidly home, instead of joining one of the groups of her companions, as was her custom.

Perhaps not one of the girls was so indignant over the matter as Anna Arnold, for she was a girl of strong attachments and a loyal friend. Absolutely truthful and frank herself, she could not understand a nature that was too weak to freely confess a fault.

In this state of mind she reached home and related the occurrences of the morning to her mother's sympathetic ear.

"I don't think I ought to tell you the name of the girl," she said, as she ended her story, "because it seems like tattling, and I know how you hate that."

"I should rather not know it," replied her mother, "especially if she is to make one of our camping party, for it would have the effect of making me conscious, and I want to treat all alike."

"I am afraid I said some pretty hard things to her after school, but I was so indignant I had to let off my feelings."

"Don't say any more hard things to her, then. Let her conscience work out the mat-

ter, and she will probably do the right thing in the end. It will be impossible for her to be happy when she knows the way all her friends feel toward her."

"I don't believe she has any conscience. If she had felt sorry she would have set matters straight at once."

"Oh, yes, she has, dear, but you must remember that some natures are weaker than others, and lack the courage to do what they know is right. She can never be contented to let things continue as they are now. Something will happen to right matters, you see if it is not so. I shall hope much from our summer together."

"I don't believe Alan will go, particularly if he finds out she is going. He is dreadfully reserved, you know."

"Oh, he must go! It is some time ahead, and by that time the minds of all of you will have been softened."

Anna was much happier after this conversation with her mother; but her mind dwelt on the subject continually, and she

could not feel so hopeful as to the termination of it as her mother did.

We left Alan in his room with the little squirrel seated on the table in front of him.

As soon as Alan saw his visitor, a smile came over his face that at once transformed it, and he held out his hand gently toward the little creature. "I forgot you, Bob," he said; "I have *one* friend, after all."

The tame little creature at once ran up the boy's shoulder and poked his inquisitive nose into each of his pockets in turn, but evidently did not find what he expected, for he returned to his seat on the table and resumed his steadfast gaze at the boy.

"I shall not disappoint you, old fellow," said Alan, rising and opening one of his bureau drawers. "I can't afford to lose your friendship, and I strongly suspect I should if my nuts gave out."

He held a walnut toward the squirrel, who at once seized it. Alan watched him sitting on his haunches and holding the nut in his forepaws while he began to drill a hole in it.

While thus engaged, steps were heard approaching, and a loud rap on the door sent the little squirrel flying toward the window, the walnut securely packed in his cheek.

“Come in!” called Alan. The door was flung wide open, and George Graham and Harry Arnold entered.

“Come, old chap, don’t be down-hearted,” cried George cheerfully, giving Alan a sounding slap on the shoulder. “We’re all with you, and so are the girls. You should have heard them give it to Hattie Haynes! They must have made her feel like crawling through a knot-hole!”

“She looked as if she would like to,” said Harry. “Not one of them would walk home with her; even Goggles avoided her.”

“You don’t mean to say you are so cut up about such a trifle!” exclaimed George, as Alan’s face resumed the gloomy expression it had worn when the boys first entered.

“My father does n’t look on it in the light of a trifle, I can assure you,” replied Alan, bitterly. “He has thrown me over

completely, and says he can't afford to spend any more money on my education."

"How absurd!" exclaimed George, indignantly. "What can he be thinking of? Of course you'll be taken back as soon as the committee know the truth of the matter!"

"They will never know it through me!" exclaimed Alan.

"You don't mean to say you haven't told your father the whole story?" asked Harry, in astonishment.

"Certainly I have not. If he doesn't take interest enough in me to inquire into the matter, he can think anything of me he pleases."

George gave a prolonged whistle, which with him was the sign of mental uneasiness.

"This will never do, old chap, you know," he said kindly; "I see we must run the case for you. Come, Harry, as Alan is not capable of managing this affair, I'm going in to beard the lion in his den and tell the whole story to him. Do you want to come with me?"

"No, you shall do no such thing," exclaimed Alan, seizing George by the arm as he was about to leave the room. "Let the matter be as it is, and leave me to take care of my own affairs."

"Such lunacy I never beheld," exclaimed George, returning and taking a seat on the table. "Count his pulse, Harry, and apply a cold bandage to his brow."

"If he persists in this asinine course of behavior," said Harry, "there only remains for us to turn our attention to the committee. If argument fails to move them, we'll form a conspiracy with the other fellows, gag and bind them, and force them to write an humble note, entreating the stray lamb to return to the fold."

"What ridiculous fellows you are!" exclaimed Alan, laughing in spite of himself. Indeed a nature must be obdurate that could resist the influence of these two light-hearted boys, and in a few moments the three were talking and laughing together as if the recent occurrence were a thing of the past.

"I forgot that Goggles is waiting outside to offer his sympathy," said George, at last. "Shall he come in?"

Outside the door, with a serious countenance, was seated the bull-terrier. He walked up to Alan, and laying his head on his knee, gazed wistfully with his expressive brown eyes into the boy's face.

"He knows all about it, don't you, old boy?" said Alan, patting the broad head.

Who can say that he did not?

## CHAPTER SIXTH



HE state of Hattie Haynes's mind was not an enviable one. She felt keenly the open avoidance of her expressed by her schoolmates, and for several days after the episode of the note led a secluded and unhappy life. Young people of both sexes are severe judges, and Hattie was made to feel the full force of their disapproval. She went to and from school alone, remained in her seat during recess, and never sought by word or look to communicate with her companions.

In spite, however, of the severity brought to bear upon her, she made no attempt to repair the evil she had created. One word from her would have ended this unhappy state of affairs, but she had not the moral courage to utter it, and she lived in constant



fear lest the true version of the case should reach the ears of her parents and teacher. Yet in spite of her faint-heartedness she would have given worlds if she had been courageous enough to have taken the blame of her misdemeanor upon herself.

Meanwhile the other girls had worked themselves into a state of great excitement, and this culminated when George Graham and Harry Arnold reported the low mental condition in which they had found their friend Alan.

"Now that his father has thrown him off I should n't be surprised to hear of his doing anything," said George to Anna Arnold and Sue Scudder, as he walked home from school with them the day after the occurrence. "I only hope he will not do anything rash."

"Such as what?" asked Anna.

"Well, shipping aboard some vessel, for instance," replied George. "He is fond of the sea, and spends most of his spare time among the docks whenever a new vessel comes in."

"Why did n't he tell his father the whole story?" asked Sue. "He certainly could not blame him for refusing to give away one of his schoolmates."

"It is a very unfortunate state of affairs," replied George. "Mr. Leigh is cold and does not invite Alan's confidence, and Alan is too proud to justify himself when his father will not meet him half-way. Harry and I wanted to explain matters, but Alan would not let us mix in."

"I have an idea," said Anna, quickly. "This condition of affairs must not continue. Alan must go to camp with us, he has so few pleasures it will help thaw out his reserve, and I have made up my mind to go and see Mr. Leigh and tell him the whole story."

"You will not find him very affable. You will probably be so frightened when he looks at you over his spectacles that you will forget what you came for."

"Not I. I will leave the doors open behind me, so I can run if he becomes

dangerous. Besides, I will take Sue as a moral support. Will you come, Sue?"

"Certainly I will; but what if we should meet Alan on our way? He will know at once what we came for."

"We'll look after Alan," replied George. "Say when you are ready, and we'll have him safe out of the way. I think your plan is a good one, for Alan doesn't suspect you of mixing in, and he will never know it, for his father never tells him anything."

So it was arranged that the next Saturday afternoon Alan was to be taken out of the way, in order to leave the coast clear for the two girls to carry out their plan.

As Saturday approached, it must be confessed that Anna Arnold did not feel quite so brave in carrying out her undertaking as she did when the plan first seized her; and even Sue Scudder, usually so fearless in speaking her mind, found herself dreading the interview.

Neither of the girls had ever addressed a single word to Mr. Leigh, who lived a

secluded life, his only interest centring in his literary pursuits. Therefore it was with some trepidation that the two girls found themselves, on the following Saturday afternoon, walking up the driveway that led to Mr. Leigh's house.

The neglected grounds and sombre trees shading the house did not tend to raise the spirits of the two girls, as they stood on the doorsteps and looked about them and then at each other ; and it took some resolution to summon courage sufficient to raise the large iron knocker on the heavy door before them.

“ How dark it seems ! ” said Anna, in a low voice, for her usual tones would have seemed out of place in such stillness ; “ it was bright sunshine out in the street and here it seems as if the sun were down. How do you feel, Sue ? ”

“ I feel very much as if I were going to the dentist's to have a tooth pulled. I believe I would rather.”

“ I would rather have half a dozen pulled,” replied Anna, “ but we are in for it, and it

is too late to go back even if we wanted to; so here goes."

She raised the heavy iron knocker and gave three loud taps that sounded in the silence like so many pistol-shots.

For a moment no response came to their summons, and they were about to try again, when a door from within was heard to shut and steps approached.

The door was unlocked, but not without much previous fumbling at the keyhole, giving the girls the impression that visitors were a rare occurrence. After much pains the door was opened just wide enough to admit a head, and the austere face of a woman of middle age presented itself.

"Can we see Mr. Leigh?" asked Anna, in her usual gracious manner that always attracted strangers. It had no effect on the possessor of the austere countenance, however, whose face did not relax its severity as she replied,—

"I don't know whether you can or not. He's busy."

"Will you kindly ask him if he will see us for a few moments?" asked Anna.

"What's your business with him?" asked the woman, still keeping the door partially open, and holding it firmly in place with her hand, as if to prevent a sudden rush on the part of the visitors. "He isn't very fond of being disturbed for nothing."

"It would be rather difficult to explain our business to you," replied Anna, "but it is very important."

"If it is money you are after for any of your meetings or *societies* as you call 'em, I can tell you beforehand that it isn't of any use. He's as tight as the bark of a tree."

"We do not want any money of Mr. Leigh," said Anna, with great dignity, "and we shall detain him only a few moments."

"Well, I'll see what I can do for you," replied the austere woman. "I suppose you may as well step in."

She opened the door wide enough to allow the girls to enter in single file, and threw

open the door of a room near by. "Set down and I'll speak to him," she said briefly.

It had seemed dark to the girls as they stood outside the door, but it was light and sunny in comparison with this room, the blinds of which were closed and the shades drawn down.

"What Egyptian darkness!" said Sue, in a low tone.

"'Set down,'" whispered Anna. "I am going to sit somewhere, although I can't see any furniture."

A clatter and rattle immediately followed these words, followed by a suppressed laugh.

"What in the world are you doing?" asked Sue.

"I'm sitting in the coal-hod and I've pushed over the tongs or something. I thought I was going to land on a chair."

The situation struck both the girls as ludicrous and as one extreme follows another, the transition from the tension of their nerves as they stood waiting for the door to be opened to the present absurd situation was a

very easy one, and they both gave way to almost hysterical laughter.

“If I can reach the window without knocking over anything, I shall pull up one of those shades,” said Sue, as she groped her way toward one of the windows.

“Dear me, my crazy bone!” she exclaimed immediately. “I have run against an arm-chair or something;” and both girls were seized with another laughing fit, which they took pains, however, to tone down as much as possible.

The window was now reached in safety, and the shade pulled up; then the shade to the other window.

“Have I smutched my dress, Sue?” asked Anna, turning around that her friend might investigate the extent of the damage done to her light cambric dress.

“Yes, awfully,” replied Sue. “I can’t see very well in this dim light, but it seems to me full of dark streaks. Perhaps it will not look so bad when we get out of doors.”

“The bright sunlight will probably im-

prove it greatly," replied Anna. "I shall have to hide around in the fields and go home after dark."

"Perhaps 'twill brush off," said Sue, consolingly. "Hush! he's coming."

Both girls flew precipitately to seat themselves, and just succeeded in assuming dignified positions when Mr. Leigh appeared.

"Good-afternoon, young ladies," he said coldly, as his piercing eyes looked over his spectacles at the visitors.

"Good-afternoon, sir," returned the girls; and then there was silence.

Anna felt her courage ebbing fast as she was conscious of the influence of those searching black eyes. How should she begin? She cast an imploring glance at Sue, but gained no inspiration from that quarter, for Sue's usual confident manner had entirely deserted her.

"I am at your service, young ladies," said Mr. Leigh at last, breaking the silence that was becoming embarrassing.

Anna thought of Alan, who had so man-

fully taken upon himself the task of shielding a schoolmate who was too cowardly to take the consequences of her fault upon herself, and she made a great effort to regain her self-control.

“We came to tell you how Alan happened to be expelled from school,” began Anna, “for I don’t believe — that is, we thought he had not told you the whole story, and he is not at all to blame in the matter.”

“His schoolmates should be good judges in the case,” remarked Mr. Leigh, coldly.

“We *are*,” replied Anna, decidedly; for sarcasm does not intimidate a naturally fearless nature. “We *are* good judges, Mr. Leigh, for we saw the whole thing, and Alan behaved splendidly. I will tell you all about it. You see we have been behaving very badly lately, we always do the few weeks before vacation, and we communicated, and threw notes, and did all such things.”

“Oh!” said Mr. Leigh, “that was it, then! The boy must have acted nobly indeed!”

“Alan never threw a note in his life,”

interrupted Sue, indignantly, "and he never broke the rules in any way! He is the very best-mannered boy in the school!"

"Oh! then he was expelled for good behavior!" said Mr. Leigh, with a short laugh. "I don't think I ever heard of a case of this kind before."

"You didn't let me finish my story, Mr. Leigh," said Anna, with great dignity. "The teacher at last said the first one caught throwing a note would be expelled from school. One day one of the girls wrote a note, and just as she was going to throw it, it fell out of her hand and lighted at Alan's feet. He sat directly across the aisle from her. The teacher thought Alan had thrown it, and the girl was too much of a coward to own up, so poor Alan was dismissed in disgrace; and we all felt very bad indeed about it, Mr. Leigh. So we thought we would tell you all about it, so you would not blame Alan."

"This puts the affair in another light," said Mr. Leigh, as Anna ended her story. "Of

course Alan could not have done anything else, but why did n't Alan tell me this himself?"

"I think it was because he — well, to tell the truth, Mr. Leigh, we were both so afraid of you when we got here that we did n't know how to begin."

"I did n't know I presented such a formidable appearance. I am glad to know the truth of the matter; but the mischief is done, and Alan probably feels happy in reflecting on his chivalrous conduct."

"I don't believe he is happy at all," replied Anna, earnestly. "He looks very miserable. And, oh! Mr. Leigh, excuse me for saying it, if I ought not, but will you not tell Alan you approve of his conduct? He is n't just like the rest of the boys, he is so reserved and shy, and I am sure he will feel happier if you tell him you are satisfied with him. Please don't tell him we called and told you about this. We should not like to have him know. And, oh! I came near forgetting something very important I had to say. We are all invited

to camp out for the summer at the Point, that is, all of our Society are, and we all want Alan to go with us. Will you please let him go?"

Anna's frank manner seemed to make some impression on Mr. Leigh's unimpressionable nature, for he gave the required permission and even seemed almost cordial when he bade the girls good-afternoon, and said he hoped to have the pleasure of meeting them again.

"I can't say that I return the compliment," remarked Anna, as the two girls walked rapidly away from the gloomy house, "for this was the hardest thing I ever did in my life."

"You did finely," replied Sue, "and it was evident that you made quite an impression on him; but isn't he sarcastic? I don't wonder Alan is so moody and taciturn, between his father and that vinegar-faced female who let us in."

"I forgot all about my dress. Is it fit to wear through the streets?"

L. of C.

"It isn't half so bad as I thought it was. Nobody will notice it."

Thus ended the dreaded expedition, and it was a pity that the two girls did not have the satisfaction of witnessing the result of their errand of mercy. On returning that afternoon Alan was proceeding, as usual, directly to his chamber, when his father's voice called him as he passed the study door.

"I have just learned," said Mr. Leigh, "how you happened to be expelled from school. I am relieved to know that it was through no fault of yours. It is unfortunate, though, that such chivalry should be wasted, for the girl for whose misdeemeanor you are atoning is not worth the sacrifice."

"I couldn't very well do anything else, sir," said Alan.

"Unfortunately you could not, but I must confess that I am seriously disturbed at the occurrence, for I had hoped to have you finish your term at the school."

"You can't be any more sorry than I am, sir," replied Alan sorrowfully, as he turned

to leave the room, for he never forgot that his father had no time to waste.

"By the way," called his father, as the boy was walking away, "I hear that the members of the club to which you belong are invited to the seashore for a few weeks. You had better go with them."

"How could he have heard all this?" asked Alan of himself after he had reached his chamber. "Somebody must have told him, and it must be one of the S. I.'s. It could n't have been George or Harry."

Over this problem Alan pondered long, but arrived at no definite conclusion. A load was lifted from his heart, now that he knew that his father no longer blamed him, and he began to dwell with pleasure on the prospect of the camping party. He even whistled softly to himself as he made himself presentable for the tea-table, and the little squirrel on the tree outside the window gazed with surprised eyes at the unusually happy countenance of his boy friend.

## CHAPTER SEVENTH



ORTUNATELY time works changes at all ages and in all conditions of life, but never do they follow one another so rapidly as in youth.

Gradually, and almost without their being aware of it, the former relations between Hattie and her schoolmates crept into the old routine, and she no longer walked to and from school by herself nor passed her recesses in the schoolroom. Not that the sentiments of her companions had undergone a change, but the warfare was not continued. She felt the difference in their feelings toward her, and knew that she never again could be to them as she was before the breach came.

The boys did not so readily receive her into their circle as the girls did. They

were polite, but she felt keenly the barrier between her and them, and she knew her conduct towards one of their number would never be forgotten. The code of honor among the young is very rigid, moral cowardice standing at the head and front of it, and Hattie knew that when she was a gray-haired woman the story of her shame would be remembered by every one of her companions.

The school days were over for the season, and vacation was at last at hand. Anna and Harry Arnold had gone to their summer home with anticipations of a pleasant reunion in July. The girls now had leisure to attend to the all-important question of the wardrobe, and the first day of July found a happy party assembled on the platform of the little Harbortown station, waiting for the morning train for Sunset Point.

Mrs. Norton, the eldest daughter of Mrs. Arnold, was on hand to begin her duties as chaperon; and a most pleasing duty it was, if her happy, vivacious countenance were any

indication of her sentiments. "Mrs. Norton seems just our own age," the girls often said, and indeed her few years' seniority did not count. Her frank, unaffected manner made her very popular with the boys, and the influence she exerted over them was of the best.

"I am afraid I am not a very good chaperon," she had remarked to her mother when asked to fill this important post, "because I am so fond of the boys and girls, I am not shocked at anything they do."

"You have just what is needed," her mother had replied, "and that is the gift of gaining their confidence."

George Graham, who usually took the lead in such matters, because he was businesslike and energetic, undertook the task of manager to the little party.

"You have a very patriarchal look, George," remarked Mrs. Norton, as, with Goggles following close at his heels, he marshalled his company into the train.

"Quietly, children," he said in a solemn

tone that was not in keeping with the merry twinkle in his blue eyes; "don't crowd one another, and don't giggle any more than you can help. Take your seats in an orderly manner, and don't put your heads out of the window. Sue Scudder, you may sit with Alan Leigh, because he is inclined to be boisterous and you can keep him in order. Mrs. Norton, may I have the pleasure?" and he slid into the seat beside her, as he spoke.

Goggles at once, with an air that plainly showed he was accustomed to the business, slipped under his master's seat and remained quietly there.

"He knows, if the conductor sees him, he will have to ride in the baggage-car," explained George to Mrs. Norton, who had remarked the evident secrecy with which the dog conducted the affair, "and he hates it. He will slip out in the same manner when we reach Westport."

Such a large party of young people could not be brought together without much merriment, and the sound of their happy voices

and laughter soon arose above the racket of the cars.

"I have the tickets for my family," said George, as the conductor approached. The conductor glanced at the row of young faces toward whom George motioned, and a smile came over his face as he took in the situation.

"They're a likely-looking family," he remarked dryly.

"Buy us something to eat, Papa," called one of the girls, as a boy with a basket of confectionery and fruit appeared.

"Yes, do, Papa," cried several others; "we're awfully hungry."

"Be quiet, children," answered their pretended youthful sire. "It will spoil your appetite for dinner. You know you are not allowed to eat between meals."

The children, however, became very unruly, and clamored so vigorously for some candy, that the boy with the basket, becoming interested and entertained, stopped short in front of the supposed head of the family, and importuned him so persistently to make a

purchase that, in order to rid himself of him, George was obliged to buy. His purchase was distributed among the company with great justice.

Shortly before reaching their destination the train plunged into a tunnel, and the sudden darkness had the effect of producing a lull in the voices. Kate Lawson was seated directly in front of George Graham, and suddenly in the midst of the silence and darkness a loud scream was heard, proceeding from Kate's direction. It was unmistakably produced by masculine lungs, and as the train issued once more into the sunlight, all eyes were directed toward the seat whence the cry came.

George Graham was seen to be leaning back in his seat, apparently asleep, with the patriarchal expression on his face. As all eyes looked inquiringly at Kate, she turned around and said to her neighbor,—

“ You did n’t frighten me at all, George.”

“ Then what made you yell so ? ” was his quiet retort.

"You are certainly the most aggravating boy I ever knew," said Kate, annoyed at the laugh raised against her. "Is n't he, Mrs. Norton?"

"He is somewhat of a tease, I confess," replied Mrs. Norton.

"Westport," called out the brakeman opening the door, and the camping party hurriedly collected their belongings and hastened to alight.

A large barge was standing before the little station, and on the platform was Harry Arnold, shouting a welcome to all as the train came to a stop. Anna, too, was there, standing beside her bicycle, in front of which was suspended a basket in which was seated the puppy who has been already introduced.

He had outgrown the round proportions of his infancy, and certainly was not fulfilling the prophecy of his former owner, for he was far too long-legged and short-haired for the Yorkshire he was supposed to be.

As Goggles emerged from the car, follow-

ing closely at his master's heels, the puppy craned his long neck anxiously forward, and with a leap was out of his basket and at the bull-dog's side. Goggles seemed quite insulted to be greeted so familiarly by a half-grown pup, but the ingenuous puppy was entirely unconscious of the contempt evinced by his big companion. He seemed delighted at the acquaintance, and continued his patronage in the most cheerful manner.

"What do you think of him, George?" asked Anna, as George was watching the advances of the hospitable puppy. "Don't you think he will turn out to be a nice dog?"

"Splendid!" replied George, warmly; "why, he is almost as big as Goggles already!"

"I know you don't mean it. I can see you think he is too large for a Yorkshire."

"Oh, is he a Yorkshire? I thought he was a greyhound."

"You did not think he was any such thing. You knew I told you he was a

Yorkshire terrier and was going to be smaller when he came to his growth than he was when I bought him."

"Oh, yes, so he was; I remember now you did tell me."

"Well, joking aside, did you ever see such a ridiculous-looking creature? He will soon get to be as long-legged as a stork, and just see that speckled hair around his eyes—it is just the color of one of our roosters. I don't know what to call him, the poor thing hasn't any name yet."

"Why not call him Stilts?"

"That is just the name for him. He is the most mischievous creature you ever saw, too."

"He is affectionate, at all events," said George, as he stooped to pat the puppy, who was now jumping first on one and then on another of the party.

"He hasn't a particle of affection," replied Anna. "Every one in the family is devoted to him, but he doesn't care for any of us. And yet he will jump on

strangers to be caressed, and they always say, 'What an affectionate little creature he is!';"

"All aboard for the Point," called Harry, standing by the door of the barge.

They all climbed in, and Goggles was assisted to a seat beside the driver, from which elevation he could obtain a good view of the surrounding country, and scan the horizon for dogs, which were the only objects of interest to him in his drives. Anna mounted her bicycle, with "Stilts" seated in front of her, and the party started.

There was so much to hear and tell that Anna rode very close to the barge, and kept her sister, Mrs. Norton, in constant fear lest she should be run down. The road was narrow, but they met only one vehicle, and that was a farm team with a large dog seated beside the driver. As the two vehicles met, Goggles on the front seat of the barge and the farm dog on his seat eyed each other closely, and as they passed, each dog, without making a

sound, showed his teeth at the other, in recognition of his presence.

"What hospitable creatures dogs are!" said Mrs. Norton. "I presume jealousy is the cause of such behavior."

"They seem particularly jealous of dogs that are in a carriage or following one," replied George.

They had left the village some time ago, and the road lay between fields and woods, with occasionally a farmhouse. One of the farmhouses they passed stood near the road, and in the yard before it were a number of hens. In front of a barrel that lay on its side was a large hen, made fast to it by the leg, while her chickens wandered at large. Before any of the party knew what he meditated, the puppy, or Stilts as he must now be called, gave a leap from his basket while the bicycle was in motion, alighted on his head in the dust, quickly recovered himself, and made a rush for the captive hen.

Seizing her by the thick feathers that

grew on her back, he shook her violently to and fro. Her distressed squawks soon brought the farmer's wife to the door, and the barge was stopped as quickly as possible, several of the boys running to the rescue of the terrified hen. Stilts felt that his time was short, and after giving the hen a final shake, started in pursuit of the others, who were racing frantically about, too excited to know where they were going. The puppy, however, did not lose *his* head, but managed, before he was captured, to get a bite at several others, and was caught at last by Alan Leigh, with his mouth full of the tail feathers of a young rooster, who had in his terror pulled himself free and left his tail feathers behind him.

"I am as mortified as I can be," said Anna to the farmer's wife, who was examining her flock to discover the extent of the damage done. "If my puppy has harmed any of your hens, you must let me make it good."

"I guess they are more frightened than

hurt," replied the woman, good-naturedly; "the pup's teeth are too small to do any harm."

The poor hen that had received such a shaking still uttered terrified cries, and Stilts was secured in his basket, where he sat trying to free his mouth from the feathers that stuck to it.

The road became more rural as they proceeded, and soon glimpses of the blue sea were seen through openings in the woods. The breeze freshened also as they approached the Point, and before long they turned in at a driveway that was covered thick with pine needles and that wound among groves of the sturdy yellow pine trees that grow on our New England coasts. Soon a large house came into view, which Harry pointed out as his mother's, but the barge did not stop before it.

"Mother is at the camp waiting for us," said Harry, as the barge continued its way through a narrower driveway that led behind the stable. In a few minutes more,

through an opening in the pine woods, appeared the camp; and as the driver stopped before it, exclamations of delight and surprise arose on every side. In front of the main building, smiling a warm welcome, stood their hostess, Mrs. Arnold, and by her side her son-in-law, Mr. Norton.

“I am so glad to see you all, children,” cried Mrs. Arnold, as the young people scrambled hastily out of the barge; “I hope you will be pleased with our arrangements.”

“Pleased!” exclaimed Kate Lawson, enthusiastically; “why, it is Fairyland!”

“Come and look at the summer camp of the S. I. Society,” said Mrs. Arnold, leading the way into the large building.

It was a one-story structure, the door opening into a large room in the middle of which stood a round table, on which were a tall lamp with a tasteful shade and several books, while other smaller tables, each having a lamp on it, were placed about the room. At one end was an artistic fireplace made of cobble-stones, filled with logs and kindling

waiting to be lighted when required, while lounges and chairs suitable for a seashore parlor were placed conveniently about.

“This is the seat of honor, to be reserved strictly for your visits, Mrs. Arnold,” said George Graham, singling out a roomy arm-chair; “but is n’t this cosey, though, children?”

“Perfectly lovely,” replied all the girls.

The sleeping-rooms led out from the parlor, each with two single beds and not much room to spare, but comfortable and pretty with white bedsteads and spreads of gayly flowered cotton.

“How much pains you have taken for us, dear Mrs. Arnold!” said Sue Scudder. “I don’t see how you ever thought of doing so much for us.”

“If you enjoy it all as much as I have in planning and arranging for it, I shall be paid,” replied Mrs. Arnold. “I like to see young people happy. Now come and look at the dining-hall.”

A few feet away stood another building,

consisting of one long room with a smooth floor of hard pine, and a long table which was already laid for dinner.

“Here is the china-closet,” said Mrs. Arnold, opening the door of a large closet, “and in these drawers the table-cloths and napkins are kept, and outside is the cook-house and pantry. My idea is to use the dining-hall also for dancing or any entertainment you like. I had the floor made purposely for dancing. There is a piano, too, you see, so there need be no lack of entertainment. The tent for the boys, my son, Mr. Norton, has charge of, and he will manage that department.”

“Can’t we just look in?” asked Kate.

“Certainly,” replied Mr. Norton, “but you will be disappointed. I propose to sleep on hemlock boughs, and we shall have to get them before night. You are welcome to take a look, however.”

He led the way to the tent, and held up the flap that hung over the entrance while they entered.

The inside of the tent was bare of furniture with the exception of a few washstands, and the grass on which the tent stood made a clean fresh carpet. "It will not look so fresh long, after we take possession of it," said Mr. Norton; "our feet will soon wear it down."

"I should think beds made of boughs would be dreadfully uncomfortable," remarked one of the girls. "They must feel all sticks."

"Not at all," replied Mr. Norton. "They are made with such care that the princess in Grimm's fairy tale who discovered the pea under several feather beds, would not feel a twig. We take hemlock because it is flat, and the boughs are placed in layers in the same way shingles are nailed upon a roof. In this way the stems are all concealed under the soft tips of the branches. Then a blanket is spread over all and you have an ideal bed."

"I should think the needles would drop off as soon as they became dry," said Sue, who was of a practical turn of mind.

"So they do, but we intend to have a fresh

supply every few days. You know we are all to take our part in the household work, and cutting boughs for the beds will be one of the pleasantest duties."

Suddenly the notes of a bugle rang out from the direction of the dining-hall, and in the doorway they beheld a boy of about ten years, who was giving the dinner-call with the air of an experienced bugler.

"That is Fritz calling us to dinner," said Mrs. Arnold. "I know you must all be hungry, so we will dispense with the ceremony of preparation for this first meal in camp, and go in at once."

## CHAPTER EIGHTH



HE members of the S. I. Society with their healthy young appetites responded quickly to the hospitable invitation of their hostess, and proceeded to the dining-hall, where soup was already served.

Mrs. Norton placed herself at the head of the long table, and then glanced at the different boys of the party.

“ You are the tallest, George — ” she began.

“ And the most sedate and sensible,” added George, quickly.

“ So, as Mr. Norton will be able to be with us only from Saturday till Monday, I shall put you opposite me at the other end of the table, although you will have very little carving to do, as the cook will attend to that before he sends it in.”

"I shall be most proud and happy, I assure you," responded George, with a low bow, as he proceeded down the hall with his toes turned in and his arms akimbo. "Do as you see me do, children, and you 'll always come out right."

"He is n't the least conceited, is he?" remarked Anna.

"Harry, you can sit in the middle somewhere," continued Mrs. Norton. "I prefer to have you and George not too near each other. Alan, will you sit on my right?"

Alan flushed with pleasure at this distinction, and the girls could with difficulty restrain themselves from breaking out in applause, for they knew this move was made with a purpose.

"The rest of you can sit wherever you like," continued Mrs. Norton. "As my mother is our guest to-day, we will place her on George's right."

Mrs. Arnold was escorted gallantly to her seat by George, and the others seated

themselves wherever they happened to be. Fritz and his father, the cook, acted as waiters, and in due time all the party were served.

"Would n't it be nice, Mrs. Norton, to have us take turns in waiting on the table?" asked Sue Scudder. "It is a long table for two to wait on. I think it would be great fun."

"You would n't expect to associate with the other members of the S. I.'s, of course!" remarked George, gravely.

"We should n't object, provided they behaved well," retorted Sue, quickly.

"I am always glad when George is '*it*,' said Kate, "because he is so fond of teasing other people."

"Now, Kate, you see you are all right," said George, as the cook brought in a large pitcher of milk and set it on the table. "You remember you remarked as we came down that there ought to be plenty of milk here, because you saw so many hens on the way."

“Why, George Graham, I never said any such thing,” exclaimed Kate, indignantly. “Did I, Mrs. Norton?”

“I did n’t hear you,” replied Mrs. Norton, who had joined in the general laugh.

“I am not *quite* the idiot George tries to make me appear,” continued Kate, with asperity.

“No, it is n’t possible for you to say such a foolish thing,” said Harry, soothingly, “and George ought to be ashamed of himself. I heard the whole conversation, and you said you thought there ought to be plenty of eggs at Sunset Point because there were so many cows.”

“What is the reason you always single me out as a butt for your foolish jokes?” exclaimed Kate, when she could make herself heard. “I should think you would sometimes take one of the others.” She was really greatly vexed, and her cheeks had grown very red, and her eyes looked as if she were not very far from crying.

“It is n’t any fun to tease the others,”

replied George, "because they don't get mad, as you do."

"Why, I don't either, George Graham," exclaimed Kate, with increased indignation; and the complacent smile that came over George's countenance was sufficient answer.

"To return to the subject of waiting on the table," said Mrs. Norton, who thought it time to turn the conversation into another channel, "I think Sue's proposition an excellent one, and if you all agree, we will carry it out."

"I should like it, provided I may be excused from waiting on George," said Kate, casting on him what she intended to be a withering glance, but which he returned with a beaming smile.

"Don't say so," he implored her. "I should n't be able to eat a single mouthful if you treated me so cruelly. Please wait on me."

"No, I shall not," replied Kate, with a toss of her head.

"That is right; he doesn't deserve it," remarked Harry.

"You are just as bad as he is," retorted Kate; "you always play into each other's hands."

"Well, I *am* surprised," replied Harry, with a reproachful look. "I always come to your rescue when George misrepresents you, and this is my reward! Caprice, thy name is a Harbortown High School Girl!"

"While you are about it, you had better say, 'Misrepresentation, thy name is a Harbortown High School Boy!'" retorted Kate.

"Virtue has its own reward, and I have the consolation of a clear conscience," said Harry, solemnly.

"So have I," responded George, in an unnaturally deep base voice.

Fortunately there was a general laugh, as there often was at George's remarks, and it served to prevent the situation from becoming embarrassing, and allowed Kate time to recover from her vexation. George Graham was what is termed a "born tease," but he was so good-natured in his teasing, and so sweet-tempered when teased in return, that it was

impossible even for the most sensitive to remain long vexed with him. He was always sorry, too, when his mischief-loving nature had wounded another's feelings, and never felt satisfied with himself until he had made amends. So, after dinner was over and they had strolled out of doors, Kate saw him approaching.

"I suppose he thinks he can bring me around the way he does the other girls, but he'll find himself mistaken," said Kate to herself, and she fortified herself to repel all his advances. "The girls have just spoilt him."

Holding out his hand to her, he said: "I'm awfully sorry if I made you feel bad, Kate. Let's shake hands and make up."

"I don't wish to," replied Kate, holding her hands behind her and ignoring the proffered hand.

"Yes, you will! Come, don't be huffy. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, you know I didn't."

"You meant to make me appear ridiculous

to the others," retorted Kate; "that is exactly what you meant."

"Are you always going to be angry with me? Are n't you *ever* going to forgive your friend?" asked George, with such a plaintive expression on his usually laughing face, that Kate thought it best to look in another direction, for she felt her obduracy weakening under his persistency.

"Come, Kate," he said coaxingly, "don't keep it up so long. If you don't want to shake hands, I'll shake this instead!" and he took hold of the end of the long braid that hung down her back.

"Don't be so absurd, George Graham," exclaimed Kate, as he fervently shook the braid with both hands; and the nervous twitching of her mouth in her effort to preserve her gravity told George that his cause was gained. Holding out his hand once more toward her, he said with the accustomed humorous gleam back in his eyes, —

"Don't you think you have punished me sufficiently?" And before Kate fully realized

what she was doing, her hand went out towards him and was warmly shaken.

“Just the way he brings the other girls around, you great goose you!” said Kate to herself, as they joined their companions.

By this time the team with the luggage arrived, and the girls busied themselves in unpacking and disposing of the limited wardrobe they brought with them, while the boys, under Mr. Norton’s supervision, went in search of hemlock boughs for their beds. Goggles naturally accompanied his master on this expedition, and Stilts, the puppy, was allowed to roam about the camp at his own sweet will.

Mrs. Arnold retired to her own house directly after dinner, and Mrs. Norton, the youthful chaperon, seated herself just outside the door of the girls’ camp, where she could enjoy the breeze as she crocheted. The voices of the girls reached her, while they talked and chatted over their unpacking, and their frequent peals of laughter proved so contagious that it was impossible for her not to respond.

"Have any of you girls seen my white muslin shirt waist?" called out Mary Mason. "I am sure I laid it on this chair and there is n't a sign of it."

"I was just going to inquire if my pink necktie had got with any of your things," said Hattie Haynes. "I had it a moment ago in my hand."

"'A place for everything and everything in its place,' girls," said Sue Scudder.

"What *has* that puppy got in his mouth?" suddenly exclaimed Anna. "It is something pink. My goodness, I believe it is your necktie, Hattie!" and as she spoke she darted toward the puppy, who was discovered under one of the beds, seated on the white muslin waist, and engaged in tearing to pieces the pink necktie. As soon as he saw Anna approaching, he started up and darted out of the door, dragging the necktie after him. Several of the girls joined in the pursuit, and quite an exciting chase followed, the puppy dodging his pursuers for some time with great skill.

When the pink necktie was finally recovered, it was found to be in such a limp and moist condition that it was useless, and the white muslin waist was crumpled and soiled.

“What shall I do with the mischievous creature?” asked Anna, despairingly. “We can’t keep everything out of his reach, and if he were tied up he would drive us distracted with his yelping.”

“I suppose all puppies have to go through the destructive period,” said Mrs. Norton, “I never knew one that did n’t. Why don’t you give him in charge of Fritz? He can take him with him when he goes on errands, and that will give him the exercise he needs. Perhaps George will put Goggles under his care, and we will make him master of the hounds.”

“Goggles doesn’t need anybody’s care. He is here to take care of us, you know.”

So Stilts was given in charge of Fritz, with strict injunctions to keep him in sight. The management was agreeable to

both parties, for boys like puppies, and puppies like boys. They sealed the compact by a race down the path that led to the shore, and as they disappeared in the distance the puppy was seen to have his teeth securely fastened in Fritz's knicker-bockers, thus enjoying a ride with little exertion on his part.

"That is a load off my mind," said Anna, with a sigh of relief. "That puppy has been a constant care to me ever since I bought him."

"There come the boys and Mr. Norton," exclaimed one of the girls, as the party of boys laden with hemlock boughs, with Goggles at their head, were seen approaching the camp.

"You remind me of Birnam wood coming to Dunsinane," said Anna, as the boys threw down their burden of fragrant boughs in front of their tent.

"No burn 'em wood. Make 'em bed," replied George, striking the attitude of an Indian brave and taking a few steps of a war-dance.

"George would make a splendid Indian, he's so dignified," remarked Kate, as George wound up with a war-whoop.

"Alan would make a better one, he's so dark," said Anna.

"Him too much talk for Injun — Injun no talk, no laugh," replied George solemnly, striking himself on the chest after the manner in which Indians are supposed to emphasize their remarks.

"Big Injun, big talk," said Sue, quietly.

The other boys meanwhile had carried armfuls of hemlock inside the tent, and were beginning to make their beds under Mr. Norton's supervision. So George lifted his bundle of boughs on his broad shoulder and entered the tent, keeping step to a lively tune he softly whistled.

"I wonder if George ever had a fit of the blues!" remarked Anna, as their eyes followed him.

"I can't imagine it. I should think it would make people laugh if he did," said Sue. "He is irrepressible."

When the beds were carefully made and blankets laid over them, with another blanket folded up at the foot for a covering, they presented a very comfortable appearance. The boys were to take turns in providing fresh branches, and also divide between them the care of keeping the tent in order. The rest of the work was divided among them and the girls. The girls were to wait on the table, as well as set it and wash the more delicate dishes, while the boys brushed up the floor, brought water from the spring, and made themselves useful in other ways.

The first evening in camp was a beautiful one, and when the tea dishes were washed and put away the whole party strolled down to the beach to watch the sun set across the water. The pine grove in which the camp was situated tended gradually to a point, and a huge pile of rocks at the extreme end seemed like a mighty fortress, against which in stormy times the waves threw themselves with terrific force. This night, however, the sea was calm, and broke in

gentle gurgling tunes against the rocky barrier. Here on smooth projections the party seated themselves and gazed across the water at the glowing sun just ready to drop out of sight. The calm sea, together with the soothing effect that sunset brings, made its impression on their young natures, and even George Graham and Harry Arnold felt the influence, and their usually vivacious countenances wore a serious expression.

“I presume there have been shipwrecks on this coast,” remarked Alan Leigh. “These old rocks could probably tell many tales if they could talk.”

“Indeed they could,” replied Mrs. Norton. “I remember once a Spanish ship went down just here. I was a little girl, but it made such an impression on me that for years I did n’t dare come here alone.”

“What did you expect to see?” asked her brother, “the ghosts of Spanish sailors?”

“I should n’t have been surprised to see anything. Whenever I looked down into

the water I imagined I could see the faces of the poor drowned Spaniards looking up at me. The people over in the village believed that there was Spanish gold on board, and for a long time they searched for it. Even now I believe they have n't given up the hope of unearthing it."

"If there had been any it must have been either buried in the sand or carried away by such an undertow as there is here," said Alan.

"What do you mean by an undertow?" asked Mary Mason.

"Why, the one on *top* of course," replied George, ostentatiously placing one foot above the other.

"How very lucid your explanation is! I might have known it if I had reflected," replied Mary.

"'Think twice before you speak' is a good motto," said George, gravely.

"I will — to you," answered Mary.

"Can't you tell us about the shipwreck, Mrs. Norton?" asked Alan.

“I wish I could, but I was so young at the time, not more than five or six years old, that I understood very little of what was going on. I remember hearing guns fired very rapidly, and was told they were fired by a ship in distress. The people all rushed to the Point, and I heard later that they saw the ship go down without being able to do anything to save her.”

“Was the lighthouse here then?” asked Alan, looking toward the revolving light that was stationed on an island near by.

“Yes, a lighthouse was there, but it was not so large as the one they have now. After that wreck the life-saving station was established here, and they have done good work.”

“They are great institutions, those life-saving stations,” said Alan. “It must be a satisfaction to think you have saved lives.”

“But how dreadful to see a ship go down with all on board without being able to save her!” said Mary Mason.

"I don't believe that often happens," said Harry. "It is wonderful what the life-saving station do. Even before the station was established here, the fishermen in the village did wonders. You ought to hear old Captain Higgins tell about the wrecks he has seen! He has saved ever so many lives, but he's awfully modest about it."

"Could n't we get him to tell us some of his stories?" asked Sue. "They would be very interesting."

"He would be scared to death to talk before such a large audience," said Harry. "It is hard to get him to talk to old friends."

"When he knows us better, perhaps he will not be so bashful," said Sue.

"He has promised to supply our table with fish and lobsters," said Mrs. Norton, "so you can improve the opportunity to make friends with him. But we have forgotten that we came to watch the sunset. There goes the sun out of sight!"

The large yellow disc looked as if it were just dropping into the sea, and as soon as the

last of its outline was seen, the clouds caught its parting gleams and gave them back in rich gold and pink. The little party watched them gradually fade to delicate rose and lavender shades, and then resolve into a soft gray. They still sat there, enjoying the refreshing breeze and the stillness that follows the going down of the sun.

Then after darkness had settled down, up rose the moon, and sea and sky and wooded shore were bathed in her tender light.

“I think moonlight is more beautiful than sunlight,” exclaimed Mary Mason. “What could be more beautiful than that silvery sheen on the water!”

“Attention, children, Mary is about to improvise an ode to the moon,” said George.

“No, she is n’t, but George is going to give us a song,” replied Mary.

“Oh, do sing,” said Mrs. Norton; “singing sounds so well by the water.”

The boys were in the habit of singing together, and they readily responded to the request. Then the girls sang with them, and

it was late when Mrs. Norton remembered it was her duty as chaperon to have her charges keep early hours. So they parted for the night, all satisfied with the success of the first day in camp.

## CHAPTER NINTH



HE camp was a busy place the next morning. The girls on the Table Committee, as they designated those to whom the care of the dining-hall fell, proceeded to their work with great zest, as soon as breakfast was over. Those who had care of the bedrooms and parlor at once began their work, and the camp resounded with merry voices. The boys took up their duties with equal pleasure, and made fully as much noise over it, although it was of a different character. The shrill screams of the girls as one of them was hit by a pillow or dusted in place of some article of furniture, contrasted with the deeper voices and shouts of the boys, who interspersed their labors with occasional trials of strength.

These sounds, so suggestive of happy young life, were as music to the sympathetic ears of the young chaperon and her mother.

"I don't care how much noise they make, provided they are good-natured and do not quarrel," said Mrs. Norton.

"It brings life into this quiet place," replied her mother, "and I trust my plan will work as well as I hoped. One thing I am sure of, and that is that if they are bent only on pleasure, their natures will react on one another, and dissensions will follow."

"So you wisely proposed that they should have regular duties to perform, to keep them out of mischief."

"These light duties are all very well, and you see they manage to make play of their work. I mean that they must have some occupation that will really require an effort and some sacrifice on their part. There are plenty of cases in the village where these happy young people can fit in. They will be all the better and happier for knowing that they can be of use in the world."

"How would it do for the girls to organize a sewing-bee, and devote at least one afternoon a week to cutting out and making clothing for some of the people who have large families?"

"Very good, an excellent plan; and this morning I shall begin by sending Anna and another girl to visit my old women. Harry can drive them in the beach-wagon."

So, as soon as the morning work of the camp was finished, Harry, with his inseparable friend George on the front seat of the beach-wagon, and Anna and Sue on the back, started for the village, with a basket laden with the good things that old ladies like, and that their slender means would not enable them to procure. Goggles also made one of the party, sitting between the two boys on the front seat, as the day was warm and the unusual excitement of following a carriage led him to take more exercise than was good for him.

"Take good care of my girls, Harry," was his mother's injunction when they were

ready to start, "for if anything happens to them through your carelessness, I shall never trust you to take them again."

"Never fear, I 'll take the best of care of your pet lambs," replied Harry, as he drove off.

"And I will help him," called back George.

"Of course nothing can happen to them," said Mrs. Arnold to her daughter, as they watched the young people out of sight. "Harry has driven ever since he was old enough to hold the reins. The only danger is that the boys' high spirits will get the better of their judgment, and they will be careless."

"Why, what could they do?" asked her daughter. "There is nothing on the road to frighten even a colt, and Bess would go safely from here to the village without a driver."

"I know it is absurd, but young people sometimes do very foolish things."

"Harry is excitable, I know," replied Mrs. Norton; "but he is so used to horses, I am

sure he would never run any risk when he has the care of young ladies."

They both joined the young people left in camp, and soon forgot about the party despatched to the village.

Meanwhile the four occupants of the beach-wagon continued on their way. The road lay between fields, with occasional patches of woodland. Sue Scudder so seldom had an opportunity to drive, that this early morning expedition was a great treat, and she took in all the beauties of the landscape.

"Oh, how picturesque!" she exclaimed, as they drove over a rustic bridge that crossed a creek that emptied into the ocean. "If I could draw, I would just love to paint that bridge!"

"We'll go over it again, since you admire it so much," replied Harry, suddenly checking old Bess, who had rattled over the bridge at a lively pace, and proceeding to turn around in the rather narrow road.

"No, don't turn around," called Sue; "I hate to turn in such a narrow road, the

wheels make such a horrid scraping noise. Oh!" she exclaimed, as the carriage tilted somewhat to one side, "we shall tip over!" and she clutched the side of the carriage with both hands.

"If you back your wheel far enough on the opposite side from the direction in which you want to go, you are all right," replied Harry, as he drove over the bridge again.

Then came another turning, during which Sue went through the same programme of screaming and remonstrating.

"Harry, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to tease Sue so," said his sister, as he proceeded again to turn, in order to pass over the bridge once more.

"Why, she said she admired the bridge, and I am only giving her a chance to take it in," he replied. "What more can I do?"

George made a remark to his friend that the girls did not hear.

"I know George is proposing something to tease us," said Anna, "or he would n't be afraid to say it aloud."

"I merely proposed," said George, with a most innocent expression of countenance, "that, as Sue admires the bridge so much, it would be a good plan to leave her here for a while, to study the architecture."

"How very considerate!" said Sue, in a sarcastic tone.

"Don't mention it," replied George, politely, as Harry jumped out and began to unharness the horse. George assisted him on the other side, and in a moment the horse was taken out of the shafts.

"What a happy thought!" exclaimed Anna, who knew by experience that the shortest way to stop her brother's teasing was not to show any annoyance at it. "This is a cool and comfortable spot, and we can have a nice time all by ourselves. I have ever so much to tell you, Sue, that I could n't say before the boys."

Goggles was disturbed in his mind at this novel procedure, and watched the boys' movements with the wrinkles in his forehead deeper than ever. He was evidently

uncertain in his mind whether he should follow the boys or remain behind with the girls. His master, however, solved the problem for him.

“Sit there and watch the carriage, old boy,” he said, as he jumped up behind Harry on Bess’s back.

“Will an hour be sufficient for you to take in the proportions of the bridge?” asked Harry.

“Not half long enough,” replied Sue.

“Well, then, we’ll split the difference, and say an hour and a half,” said Harry.

“Don’t hurry back,” called out Anna, cheerfully, as the boys rode off; “it is delightful here.”

“Did you ever see such provoking creatures!” exclaimed Anna, as soon as the boys were out of hearing.

“I really did n’t think they would carry the joke so far,” said Sue. “I thought they were only pretending to go off and leave us.”

“There is no limit to the foolishness of

those boys when they get together, and the only way to stop them is to pretend you don't care."

"How long do you suppose they will stay away?"

"Oh, not long; they can't stand it many minutes. They will want to see how we have taken it."

"Wouldn't it be fun to hide somewhere and give them a good scare about us?" asked Sue.

"You forget Goggles is here, and would lead them at once to our hiding-place."

"I forgot that, so he would; but I do wish we could make them anxious about us for a little while."

"It would serve them right if we could. I heard mother tell my sister this morning that she didn't like to have Harry and George go together, the two were so apt to get into mischief. She wanted Alan to go instead of George, but he was on duty about the camp, and couldn't."

"Dear old Goggles!" said Sue, patting the

faithful dog's head. "I wish your master had some of your dignity."

"The idea of George Graham having any dignity," exclaimed Anna; "and yet he can be so nice when he chooses."

"I think I hear something coming," exclaimed Sue, after they had been silent for a few moments. Goggles was gazing intently down the road, in the direction in which the boys had disappeared, his ears pricked forward and a very anxious expression on his face.

"Yes, certainly a horse is coming," replied Anna; "but I don't believe it is the boys, or Goggles would wag his tail and look pleased, and you see he is anxious, and his tail is as stiff as a poker."

The girls waited breathlessly as the sounds approached, and soon a horse that was not Bess came into view around the bend in the road. In the Concord wagon, the seat of which was covered with an old buffalo skin, the hair worn off in large patches, was seated an elderly man.

"It is old Mr. Burnham!" exclaimed Anna; "and he is on the way to the camp with eggs."

"Oh, dear! I was in hopes it was the boys back," said Sue, with a sigh.

"I will tell you what we will do," exclaimed Anna. "We will get him to take us back to the camp. The boys will be sure to go back there when they find us gone, and then we will hide, and you may be sure they will be well frightened."

"But somebody will see us, and tell them we are back."

"If any girl sees us, we will take her into our confidence, and you may be sure any of them will be glad to have George and Harry punished for their misdeeds. I don't suppose there is one among them they have n't teased."

The horse and wagon had now reached them, and when he was opposite them the man stopped his horse, looking in surprise at the horseless wagon with the two girls and the dog seated in it.

"You haven't met with an accident, have you?" he asked anxiously.

"No, indeed, Mr. Burnham," replied Anna. "The boys have left us here just to tease us, and I'm going to ask a great favor of you. Will you take us back to the camp?"

"Why, of course I will," answered the good-natured farmer. "Git right in. It isn't much of a wagon for young ladies to ride in, but you're welcome to it as it is. Git right in." And he turned the front wheel well aside to make room for the two girls.

"You'll excuse my gitting out to help you in, but you're so spry you don't need any h'isting," he added, as the girls sprang lightly in. In fact, they were in such a hurry to start before the boys should arrive, that Sue, who was the first to enter the wagon, almost flew out the other side in her eagerness.

"How about the dog?" asked the farmer. "There's room for another passenger in behind, along of the eggs."

"Oh, he will stay where he is," replied Anna; "you couldn't get him to come if you tried. His master told him to sit there and watch the carriage, and he will not stir till he tells him to."

"That's a kind of dog worth having. I shouldn't care to lay hold of anything he was watching. He looks like an ugly customer."

"He's as gentle as a kitten to everybody," replied Anna, "but he is dreadfully jealous of dogs, and has the reputation of being a great fighter with big dogs. I don't know how it would be if anybody took hold of anything he was watching over."

"I should rather not try the experiment. He looks as if he meant business."

Goggles did indeed look anything but kitten-like as he watched the party drive off, and seemed to be debating within himself as to whether he should allow his charges to depart. He watched them out of sight with a very anxious expression and deeply furrowed brow, and his sides

heaved with emotion, as they always did when he was deeply agitated.

Mr. Burnham, like all those who live in small villages, had a lively curiosity, and he was very desirous of learning more about the strange situation in which he found the two girls. As they did not volunteer any further information, he was bent on eliciting it from them.

"I see Harry and another young feller setting by the roadside a piece back," he remarked, after they had driven a few minutes in silence. "I concluded they was on their way to get the mare shod, but I thought 't was strange they put her harness on to take her to the blacksmith's shop. They appeared to be tickled about something, judging from the way they was laughing when I drove up. They grew as sober as judges, though, when they see me. I guess they suspicioned I should run foul of you setting in the wagon."

"I don't doubt they were in excellent spirits," said Sue. "They usually enjoy

their own jokes more than other people do."

"I expect Harry is considerable of a hector," remarked Mr. Burnham.

"I suspect he is," replied Anna, "and his friend who was with him is a thousand times worse than he is."

"You don't say so! Well, boys will be boys, you know."

"And girls will be girls, Mr. Burnham. I'll tell you how we intend to pay them off, if you will drive a little faster, for all depends on our getting back before they do."

Mr. Burnham had been driving his horse very slowly, in his desire to obtain information, but at these words he started him into a smart trot.

"The whole story is this," said Anna, who knew that the only way to stop the farmer's cross-questioning was to tell the whole story. "We remarked, as we drove over the bridge, that it was very pretty; so the boys drove backward and forward over it, just to tease us. They knew, too, that girls don't like to

turn around in a narrow road in a carriage that is not a cut-under. Then they conceived the brilliant idea of leaving us there, to admire the bridge at leisure. Of course we pretended we liked the idea of being left there. So, when we saw you coming along, I knew you were probably on your way to our place, and it occurred to me that you would take us back. We intend to hide, and give the boys a little fright when they find we are not in the carriage."

"Good for you!" exclaimed the farmer. "A smart girl will get ahead of a boy any time of day."

"I don't know about that. I have yet to see the girl smart enough to get ahead of George Graham."

"That's the young feller that was 'long of Harry, I suppose?"

"Yes; and if we succeed in getting the better of him, we shall be the first ones who ever did."

In his eagerness to assist in the downfall of the plans of two such notorious "hectors,"

Mr. Burnham urged his willing horse to renewed exertions, the two girls watching anxiously in the rear for signs of the enemy. They were relieved when they turned in at Mrs. Arnold's driveway and the boys were not in sight.

"I intended to drive around to the back of the settlement," said Mr. Burnham; "I have to leave my eggs with the man who does the cooking."

"All the better for us," replied Anna; "they will not be so likely to notice us."

The moment he stopped the two girls jumped quickly down from the wagon, after hurriedly thanking the good-natured farmer for his assistance.

"Don't let on that you have seen us if you meet the boys," said Anna, in a low tone.

"Don't you be scared, I have n't forgot I was young myself once."

The girls met no one in their short run to their camp, but, seated under the trees a short distance in front of it, they saw Mrs. Arnold and her daughter. The younger

woman was reading aloud to her mother, who was knitting, but the girls did not dare run the risk of passing them.

“We must go around to the back and climb into the window,” whispered Anna. They passed around to the window of the room they occupied together, and Sue had reached the sill in safety and was about to jump into the room, when suddenly Kate Lawson and Mary Mason came around the corner of the camp.

“What in the world are you trying to do?” exclaimed Kate. “I thought you two girls had gone to the village.”

“We started for it,” replied Anna, “but we didn’t get there;” and she related the events of the morning.

“You may rely on me to do all I can to help you,” said Kate. “If I can keep George on the anxious seat for a while, it will be the happiest day of my life.”

“When you see them coming back, you must try to look surprised not to see us with them, you know,” said Sue.

"*Surprised!* Well, I rather think so. I will get up a fainting fit, if necessary, to show how alarmed I am about you."

"You must n't overdo it, or you will make them suspect something. Remember how sharp George is!"

"I 'll manage that," said Mary ; "they will not be so apt to suspect me as they will Kate."

So Anna joined her friend, and they waited patiently within their room for the approach of the two boys.

## CHAPTER TENTH



O return to the two boys. After leaving the girls seated in the wagon, they rode toward the village until a bend in the road hid them from sight. Then they dismounted and seated themselves on a bank by the roadside, allowing Bess to feed on the short grass that grew along its edges.

When the farmer passed on his way to the camp, they felt some apprehension, for the unusual spectacle of a wagon without a horse and two girls seated in it would be sure to arouse the curiosity of any villager, in whose monotonous life events are scarce.

On reflection, they decided it was best to make no allusion to the subject; and as the farmer passed them without any questioning,

they concluded he would do the same with the girls.

“He would be too shy to question young ladies,” remarked George, after the farmer had passed without doing more than cast his eyes rather curiously at the horse who was feeding with her harness on.

“I’m not so sure of that,” answered Harry. “The curiosity of the villagers is so enormous that it gets the better of their shyness. He didn’t ask us any questions, though, and perhaps he will not ask them any.”

“It will not matter if he does. The girls are sharp enough not to tell him any more than they want him to know.”

They sat awhile longer, and then concluded that it was about time to release the girls; so they mounted Bess once more and rode leisurely toward the bridge. When they arrived there, great was their surprise to find Goggles the only occupant of the beach-wagon.

“They are hiding to pay us for leaving them,” said Harry. “If we harness and

drive off, they will show themselves pretty quick."

This move failed, however, to bring the two girls to view, and after driving a short distance the boys returned to the bridge.

"This beats the Dutch," remarked George, after they had waited patiently for several minutes. "We shall have to resort to Goggles. Where are they, old boy? Find 'em!"

Goggles, however, instead of at once alighting and conducting them to the hiding-place of the girls, remained immovable in his seat and looked wistfully along the road that led back to the camp. His sides heaved, too, with deep feeling, as if he longed for the power of speech to explain matters.

"That is strange," said George. "Goggles is great at hide and seek. I never yet found a hiding-place that he could n't ferret out."

"Perhaps he does n't know what you want him to do. Make him get out, and then he 'll understand better."

"He knows fast enough what I mean. I can see by his eyes when he does n't under-

stand me. Jump down, old boy, and find 'em quick!"

Goggles' countenance brightened and he instantly jumped to the ground. Without a moment's hesitation he trotted down the road that led back to camp.

"I suspected it," said George; "they have gone back again. Let's follow as quick as we can, and try to catch them before they reach the camp."

"It would be provoking if they got there ahead of us and told their story. Mother cautioned me so, before we started, that she will never trust me again to take them to drive."

So Goggles was taken in, and they started at a rapid pace for the camp; Bess, thinking her morning's work at an end, doing her best to reach her stable. When turning in at the driveway, they met the farmer just coming out, and Harry called out to him as he brought Bess to a walk, "Have you seen my sister and another girl, Mr. Burnham?"

"Well, I can't say as I *have*, and I can't

say as I have," he replied evasively. "I see a number of girls up to your place, and I think likely some of 'em was them."

"I 've cleared *my* coat-tails anyhow," chuckled the farmer to himself, as he drove on; "I was bound not to give the girls away."

The boys left the horse and carriage at the stable and proceeded toward the camp. The two girls from their hiding-place beheld them approaching, and stationed themselves just inside one of the parlor windows, where they could hear the conversation between the boys and the two ladies seated before the door.

As the boys came up, Mrs. Norton suddenly stopped reading and exclaimed, —

"Why, there are Harry and George back again! Where are the girls?"

"Here, of course," answered Harry; "we came back for them."

"What *do* you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Arnold. "Lay aside your joking, Harry, and be serious for once. Where are the girls?"

"I am not joking," replied Harry; "I was never more serious in my life. We thought the girls came back here to give us a scare for leaving them on the road."

"If you cannot explain yourself, perhaps George can," said Mrs. Arnold. "Will you be kind enough, George, to tell me the meaning of this strange behavior?"

"The fact is, Mrs. Arnold," began George, with great frankness and much shamefacedness, "that we have acted in a most asinine manner —"

"For once in our lives," interrupted Harry.

"Be quiet, Harry," said his mother, severely.

"We wanted to tease the girls, and just because they admired a bridge we drove over, we told them we would leave them there to study it, and we drove on. We did n't mean to stay long, just long enough to tease them, and when we came back they were both gone. We thought they were hiding near by, but when they did n't turn up we concluded they must have come back here. I'm awfully sorry, Mrs. Arnold, I'm so mad with myself

that I could kick myself ; ” and George, by way of illustration, gave one leg a few kicks with the other. During this difficult operation he lost his balance, and making no effort to recover himself, sprawled his full length on the grass. This was all done with such a serious face, so great a contrast to George’s usual animated expression, that the two elder ladies, in spite of their anxiety, found it difficult to retain the severe expression that the occasion required.

“ I thought,” said Mrs. Arnold, seriously, “ that I was intrusting my girls to the care of two gentlemen, but I find they are only boys, too young to feel any responsibility.”

“ So we are, that ’s a fact,” replied George, cordially. “ We are nothing but boys. Goggles here was the only gentleman of the party. He behaved in the most gentlemanly manner from first to last, did n’t you, old boy ? ”

Goggles signified his appreciation of the compliment in true dog fashion, and both the ladies found it difficult to maintain their dignity.

"You are incorrigible, George," said Mrs. Arnold, at last. "I am afraid I have taken too much responsibility upon myself. What *should* I do if they were all like you?"

"Fortunately they are not, and we don't deserve to be trusted ever again; but where do you suppose those girls have gone? I shall not rest until they are found."

"I presume they are hiding somewhere to frighten you, and the least you can do is to find them. Very likely they have gone to the village. Anna often walks there and back. It was only on account of the provisions that I proposed driving."

"Come on, Harry; let's go and hunt them up!" Whereupon the boys started on their errand.

The two girls, who from their hiding-place had seen and heard all, thought it time to interfere, and presenting themselves at the door, called out,—

"Boys, is n't it about time to start for the village?"

"How did you get back here so quick?"

asked Harry. "You must have run every step of the way."

"That will always remain a mystery," replied Sue.

"I know! Old Burnham brought you back," said Harry. "Now, did n't he?" he continued, as the girls did not answer.

"Don't you wish you knew?" asked Anna.

"I think Alan Leigh had better go in Harry's place," said Mrs. Arnold. "Harry might take it into his head to play another trick, and I want you back in time for dinner."

George, however, pleaded so earnestly for his friend to be allowed to go, the girls even seconding his request, that his mother at last resolved to give him another trial, and the four once more started.

"They are as full of mischief as primary-school children," said Mrs. Norton, as they watched the four depart.

"Much worse, and much harder to manage," replied her mother. "I wonder what they will do next. If all their pranks end as harmlessly as this, we may be thankful."

The four young people, meanwhile, proceeded on their way in a most exemplary frame of mind, and reached the village without any delays.

"We will stop first at Mrs. Hitchcock's," said Anna, "and get through with it."

"Is n't she nice?" asked Sue.

"You must judge for yourself," said Anna. "I want to see how they impress you."

Harry now stopped before a small house, and the two girls alighted, each carrying packages on which Mrs. Arnold had written Mrs. Hitchcock's name. A narrow path, made of small flat stones from the beach, led to the front door. On either side of the short path was a row of sea-shells, and on one side of the broad slate-stone that formed the doorstep was a large piece of coral.

"I should judge the late Mr. Hitchcock was a seafaring man, or perhaps he is still living," said Sue.

"No; he was drowned at sea ever so many years ago. But how remarkable that you should have hit upon his calling! You

ought to join a female detective force. Look about you. Look about you again, O most wise maiden, and tell me the color of the departed's hair and eyes."

Sue pretended to gaze intently from the pebbly walk to the sea-shells and clump of coral, and said solemnly,—

"His eyes were of a brilliant emerald green, and his locks were of the hue of the seaweed that floats over dead men's graves."

"Oh, don't! You positively make me feel all goose-flesh. I never saw the late Mr. Hitchcock, as he died years before I was born, but I dare say you are right. Your description would do splendidly for a sea-serpent, though."

"It rises from the deep and beckons me with its dripping hands," murmured Sue, with her eyes fixed on vacancy, after the manner of those who are supposed to behold phantoms; "I come, Phantom of the Deep, I come!"

"You will come out of your trance and

into the house," said Anna, knocking with her hand on the door, on which there was neither knocker nor bell.

"Why did you wake me? Let me dream again!" murmured Sue.

"Don't talk such nonsense. I'll take care how I set you dreaming again. Hush! here she comes."

The door was unlocked, and a short and stout elderly woman appeared. She had bright black eyes, that gave her face a vivacious expression.

"Anna Arnold, for all the world!" she exclaimed. "I knew, when my scissors dropped on the floor this morning and stuck there, that I should either see a stranger or kiss a fool before night. I never knowed the sign to fail."

"This is my friend, Sue Scudder," said Anna, presenting her friend. "We came to see how you were, and to bring a few things from my mother."

"Come right in and sit down. I'm real glad to see you. How's Mother?"

"She is very well, thank you. She is coming to see you soon, but she's very busy with her large family."

"I heard she had a lot of young folks staying with her. I s'pose she has her hands full. What name do you bear?" she asked, turning to Sue; "I didn't quite catch it."

"Scudder, Sue Scudder," replied Sue.

"Oh, yes. Related to she that was a Holmes and married Hiram Scudder? They went to the city to live soon after they was married."

"No," replied Sue; "my mother's name before she was married was Eaton."

"Oh, yes; then it ain't the one I thought. How do you like Westport? It ain't much of a place side of the place you came from, I expect."

"I think it is very beautiful here," replied Sue.

"Yes, the air is good, and it's considered a real healthy place; but I don't get out much."

“Mother wants to know how your health is, Mrs. Hitchcock,” said Anna.

“Oh, I’m pretty tolerable just now, but I was an awful sufferer through the winter. I thought one spell I should n’t live to see spring come, but here I am! I expect it is n’t for long, though, for one of my cherry-trees had fruit and blossoms on it to once, and I never knew it to fail to be a forerunner of death.”

“I never heard of it,” said Anna.

“You never did? Well, it’s a sure sign. However, we’ve all got to go some time, and there’s nobody to miss me when I’m gone;” and Mrs. Hitchcock sighed heavily.

“Are all the village people well?” asked Anna, in order to direct the widow’s mind into a new channel.

“Everybody’s about the same as usual, I guess. I wasn’t able to get around to the sewing-circle last week on account of the weather, so I ain’t heard any news. The minister’s wife’s been visiting to the city, and she’s come back with lots of new things.

I ain't seen them myself, but she 's considered pretty dressy for a minister's wife."

"I don't see why a minister's wife should n't look as nice as anybody else," said Anna.

"It takes a lot of money to keep up with the fashions, and ministers don't roll in wealth, as you may say."

"It does n't cost any more to dress in good taste than it does to dress in poor taste," said Anna. "I think your minister's wife is a sweet-looking woman."

"Yes; she looks well enough, though they do say she does n't go around among the parish as much as she 'd ought to."

"I should think her family of children would keep her too busy to do much visiting," said Anna, in the decided tone she always adopted when defending the absent.

"Yes; I expect she 's got her hands full, with all them children, though some folks do say she does n't hurt herself taking care of them, and shoves them off on other folks."

"People who say such things of such a lovely woman ought to be ashamed of them-

selves," said Anna, hotly. "Anybody can see that she is careworn, and, although she cannot have much money to spend, her children always look neat and nice."

"I did n't suppose there was anything in it; I was only telling you what they were saying about her. Folks will talk, you know," said Mrs. Hitchcock, who saw her remarks had displeased the daughter of her most influential friend, and was anxious to make a good impression.

"I know *some* will," replied Anna, "especially in country villages."

"You see, it's because there's so little to entertain 'em. There ain't no theatres nor concerts nor balls, same as the city folks have, so they fall to picking one another to pieces, I s'pose. Must you be going?" she added, as Anna and her friend rose.

"Yes; we did n't start as early as we ought to have this morning, and I have another call to make."

"On Mrs. Hiram Dexter, I s'pose? Well, I wish I was as well as she is, in spite of

her looks. Them long-faced pale women gits lots of sympathy."

Anna checked the angry retort that rose to her lips, and hurriedly bade the widow good-morning. Their hostess followed them to the door, and curiosity led her to stand on the steps as long as they were in sight.

"Now for dear old Mrs. Dexter," said Anna. "You won't hear any gossip or complaints from her, I can assure you. She is one of the best old women who ever lived."

Mrs. Hiram Dexter's little house was not very far off, small and unpainted and showing unmistakable signs of poverty. A path worn in the small grass-plot that sloped down to the road led to the door. Anna knocked, and through the window a feeble voice bade them come in. So old was the building that, as the girls stepped into the narrow entry the boards creaked under their light weights. Anna entered the room, the door of which stood open. On a sofa covered with black hair-cloth, and which looked hard

and uncomfortable, lay an old woman, leaning against the hard roll that served as pillow. As she caught sight of Anna, her pale thin face broke into a pleasant smile, and she held out both her hands.

“Well, I *am* surprised to see you. The sight of you is better than all the medicine in the world. I was just thinking about you, and wondering how you all was. And which friend is this, I wonder? You have told me so much about them that I feel as if I knew ‘em all.”

“I am Sue,” replied that young person, taking the hand extended to her.

“You’ll have to find chairs for yourselves,” said the invalid, as the girls drew two chairs toward the sofa. “Do tell me all about the goings on up to your place. I expect you’ve got it fixed up fine.”

So Anna told about the plan of the camp and the way they lived, and the worn old face brightened as she drank in every word. Sue, too, joined in the conversation, and they told about the joke the boys had played

on them that morning and the way they had "paid them off," as they termed it.

"Now tell us about yourself, Mrs. Dexter," said Anna, when they had related everything of interest they could think of. "How have you been, and how are you now? Mother asked me to find out all about you."

"I was quite smart for me along back," said Mrs. Dexter, "but of late I haven't been quite so well."

"At all events, you are not in bed, as you were last summer, and that's a gain," said Anna.

"To tell the truth, I wish I was in bed," said the sick woman. "The fact is I was taken with lumbago this morning, and couldn't get any farther than the sofa. I'm in hopes 't will let up before long, so that I can get back to bed."

"Why *didn't* you say so before!" exclaimed Anna. "Here we have been chattering our foolish nonsense while you have been suffering all the time."

"I love to hear you talk. It takes my mind off myself. I feel a sight better for seeing you."

As she spoke she made an attempt to move, but an expression of suffering came over her face and she smothered a groan. "I guess it hain't quite left me yet," she explained.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Anna, decidedly. "George Graham is out in the carriage with Harry, and he's awfully strong; he'll carry you right into your bedchamber and put you on the bed, and then Sue and I will undress you and fix you up nice, and we'll make you a cup of tea and get you up a real nice lunch."

"Oh, I could n't think of putting you to all that trouble," said the sick woman. "And that young gentleman won't want to lift around an old woman like me."

"If he does n't, he's not the young gentleman I take him to be," replied Anna. "You won't mind him one bit, he's so good-hearted and free and easy. He's stronger

than Harry, and will carry you easier." She went to the window and called, —

"George, please come in here a minute."

Instantly George's long legs cleared the wheel with one bound and he stood in the doorway, hat in hand. The first glance at his frank, handsome face dispelled Mrs. Dexter's prejudices; and a few words from Anna told him what was required of him.

"Too much to expect of me!" he exclaimed in answer to Mrs. Dexter's remark, as he tossed his hat upon a chair, "what do you think I'm here for? Why, I carried my grandmother up and down stairs all last winter, and she weighed pretty near two hundred pounds. You just put your arms around my neck," he said, as he stooped his broad shoulders, "and you 'll be in bed before you know it."

The sick woman did as she was told, and he lifted her so gently and steadily that she didn't feel a twinge of pain.

"Why, you 're nothing but a feather," he exclaimed, as he carried his burden into

the adjoining bedchamber, to the time of an original dance step of his own improvising.

“I would n’t have believed you could have moved me so easy,” she said, as she was placed on the bed.

“Now, George, if you will get us a little kindling and a few sticks, we will make a cup of tea,” said Anna.

“I hear and obey,” he answered with a low bow. The next moment they heard him chopping wood in the shed that led out of the kitchen, whistling merrily all the while.

“That boy must make it lively for you,” remarked the sick woman; “he must have a good mother, I guess. I seemed to see it in his face the minute I set eyes on him. I can always tell.”

## CHAPTER ELEVENTH



CAREFULLY and gently the two girls undressed the sick woman, and by the time their task was finished, George was back in the kitchen with kindling and sticks of wood, making a fire in the little cooking-stove. Harry, who was tired of waiting outside and curious to learn the cause of the delay, tied his horse to the fence and joined them in the kitchen. The invalid, lying comfortably in her bed, could see through the open door the figures of the young people as they bustled about preparing her lunch, and a contented smile stole over her wan features as she listened to their fresh young voices.

“It puts fresh life in me to have you around,” she said, when Sue looked in to see if the patient were comfortable; “but

I hate to have you wait on me so. It seems strange that young ladies brought up to be waited on, can take hold and make themselves so handy."

The color came into Sue's cheeks at these words, keenly sensitive to her poverty as she was; but her innate truthfulness would not permit her to appear in a false light to any one.

"You are mistaken in thinking I live as Anna does," she said with an effort. "My mother and I are quite poor and do every bit of the work ourselves. So you see it would be strange if I didn't know how to do things."

"'Tisn't everybody that is willing to own up that they are poor. Riches may hurt some folks, but the Arnolds are the kind that can't be spoilt."

"That is very true," replied Sue, warmly. "Anna never makes me feel that she has any more money than I have; but there are some who are continually reminding me of the difference between us."

“Some folks don’t know anything better than money, and judge everybody by what they have. It is a good thing to have and hard to do without, but it doesn’t make us any better.”

At that moment the tall figure of George Graham, with a towel pinned about him for an apron and a round paper cap on his head, filled the little doorway.

“I came to inquire as to what you would wish to have for lunch, mum,” he said gravely. “The wood makes too much smoke for toasted bread. Is it oatmeal gruel or farina gruel you would like, mum?”

“I *do* love farina gruel when I don’t feel well,” replied the invalid, smiling at the serious manner of the impromptu chef, “but I don’t want to put you to the trouble of making it. It’s kind of fussy work.”

“You shall have it, mum,” replied the chef, as he disappeared; “it’s made in no time.”

“Anna wanted to toast some bread to go with your tea,” explained Sue, “but George

would n't let her, on account of the smoke. He really does seem to know how to cook. I can't imagine how he learned it."

"Some folks take to it nat'rally, and others can't make things taste good, no matter how they try."

Meanwhile George was preparing his farina gruel, while the others looked on and offered suggestions which he did not take. As soon as the water boiled, Anna prepared a cup of tea, from a package of that article she had brought with her. "It is just a first course, to keep you from feeling faint until your gruel is ready," she explained, as she took it into the bedchamber.

"It smells delicious," exclaimed the sick woman, as she inhaled the fragrant drink. "I got out of that your mother sent me, and the store tea hasn't got such a fine taste to it as this has. Your mother must have paid a sight for it."

The tea was sipped slowly, in order to make the most of its fine flavor, and by the time the cup was empty George ap-



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peared, bringing in a bowl of steaming gruel, followed by Harry, bearing a plateful of delicate biscuits, which came from the same source as the tea and farina.

“Well, I never! You are a good cook!” exclaimed the invalid, as she stirred the hot mixture. “It is as smooth as glass. Some folks make it so lumpy, it just spoils it for me.”

The four attendants gathered around the bed while their patient ate her lunch, and it was evident that every mouthful gave them as much enjoyment as it did her.

“It goes to the right spot, I can tell you,” she said, as she met the gaze of the four pairs of earnest eyes.

“It will set you right up,” said Harry. “We’ll see you gadding around in the village to hear the latest news before long.”

“I wasn’t never much of a hand at gadding,” replied the invalid, gently. “Folks is real good to me, though. When I was sick last winter, they took turns coming in and doing up my work. The minister’s wife

does a sight of good. She used to read to me and cook up nice dishes to tempt me. I don't see how she finds time to do so much for other folks when she has her hands so full at home."

The two girls exchanged glances, as they recalled the conversation concerning the minister's wife they had heard during their former call.

"Now I'll tell you what our plan is," said Anna, when the lunch was eaten. "We are coming over every day to look after you, until you are well enough to take care of yourself; and some of us will be over again this afternoon to make you comfortable for the night."

"I could n't think of putting you to so much trouble. There's Sarah Page almost next door. She'll do everything necessary for me, she's always real good to me when I'm sick."

"No, Sarah Page is n't in it at all," replied Anna. "We are very headstrong young people, Mrs. Dexter, and are bent on

ving our own way; so you just let us manage this case."

"I don't know what I've ever done to deserve so much kindness," said the poor woman, simply. "It makes me feel bad to take so much from you when I can't do anything to pay it back."

"It is a real pleasure to us," said Anna. "There's no kindness in it; we just like to do it."

"And when you need any one in the way of lifting or moving," said George, "you know whom to send for. Also, if you should require the services of an expert cook, inquire at the same address. These girls do well enough for simple every-day dishes, but when you want something a little out of the ordinary, send for *me!*!" and George squared his shoulders and gave himself a sounding blow on his chest.

"What a pity such talent should be combined with so much conceit!" said Sue, with a sigh.

"If he can cook other things as well as

he can farina gruel, I don't blame him being a little mite conceited," said the invalid.

"I suspect he's reached the end of his string," replied Anna, "but we'll give him a chance to show us what he can do."

In a few minutes the dishes were cleared away, and a table drawn up to the bedside on which were placed a glass of water and a plate of biscuits. Then the young people took leave of their patient, followed by her heartfelt thanks. "It's worth being sick to be waited on by such pleasant young folks," she said; "the only drawback to it is that I hate to make so much trouble."

"Trouble!" echoed George; "why, it is n't any trouble, it's *fun!* It's the pleasantest morning I've spent for many a day. Don't you say so, children?"

"Indeed, it is," was the reply from the three others.

"Well, it's a labor of love, that's just what it is, and you'll be paid for it, though it won't be by me. You've given me lots

of pleasant things to think about, and it won't seem a mite tedious lying here."

There was a smile on the worn old face long after the sound of the fresh young voices was lost in the distance, as the lonely invalid recalled the amusing stories and cheerful nonsense of her young visitors.

As for the young people themselves, they departed in a happy and serious state of mind, full of plans for the care and comfort of their patient.

"Such a dear old lady!" exclaimed Sue, as soon as they were seated in the carriage. "I do love old people when they are like Mrs. Dexter."

"Very old people always seem to be like little children," said George. "There is something so helpless about them. Why, when she put her arms around my neck, she seemed so confiding and dependent on me that I could have carried her miles with pleasure. She reminded me, somehow, of my grandmother. I suppose it's because she's old and feeble."

"What a contrast to Mrs. Hitchcock!" said

Sue ; " and yet she does n't seem to be as well off."

" No, she is n't, she has very small means," said Anna. " Every one of her children is dead, and her husband too ; and yet she never complains of anything. I really believe she will be glad when she can die and be with her husband and children. Sometimes she gets talking about them, and her face grows so bright and happy she looks really angelic."

" I 'm going to ask Mother to send for a wheel chair for her," said Harry, " and then she can pull herself around in it."

" It would be fine," said Anna ; " I never thought of it."

" Of course you did n't ; it takes your uncle to originate."

The young people were as good as their word. Twice a day the invalid was visited and cared for. Her young nurses read to her and told her amusing stories, and they had the satisfaction of seeing her growing gradually stronger, although she continued frail and helpless.

The attention of the members of the S. I. Society was soon attracted to the fact that George Graham had suddenly taken it into his head to take early morning runs in company with the faithful Goggles. Considering the fact that he was usually one of the first to appear at the breakfast-table, this sudden and unusual departure excited much comment among his friends, and he was made to undergo a series of cross-questioning. To all of these, however, he returned very unsatisfactory answers, such as "Goggles' health needed an early morning run," or that he "had important business to transact in the village." At last the mystery was solved in the following manner.

One morning Anna took it into her head to visit her old friend before breakfast, as the sewing-bee that her sister had organized was to hold its first session on that afternoon, and none of the girls would be able to make their daily afternoon visit. So she mounted her bicycle and started on her errand. Stilts had outgrown his basket, which was a relief

to his mistress, for he required great watchfulness on her part, and she knew he was contented in the companionship of the faithful Fritz.

The cool air of the early morning, combined with the fragrant odors from the woods, brought with it a feeling of exhilaration, and Anna rode rapidly along the smooth country road. Not a human being did she meet until she reached the village, but as she turned into the narrow road where Mrs. Dexter lived, she saw a tall figure, closely followed by a white dog, cross the field in the rear of the little house and clear the wall with a bound. The dog followed, and they both set off on a run across lots in the direction of the camp.

“The mystery of the early morning disappearances is explained,” said Anna to herself. “He has been to see Mrs. Dexter every morning, I don’t doubt. It is just like him.”

On entering the little house she found the invalid propped up in bed, looking as

fresh and comfortable as only those who have breakfasted can look.

"I've found out all about it," said Anna, as she entered the bedroom. "I saw George crossing the field behind your house, and he pretended not to see me. Has he really been here every morning and given you your breakfast?"

"I don't want to give him away," said the sick woman, "because he made me promise not to tell. You won't let it go any further, will you? But the truth is, he suspicioned that Sarah Page could n't get round to give me my breakfast very early, so he has come every single morning to get it himself. Bless his big warm heart!"

"We girls ought to be ashamed of ourselves to let him get ahead of us," said Anna. "I don't see why we did n't think of it."

"Well, you see, there's nothing like experience. He's been used to having his grandmother sick, and he said she has told him how hard 't was to lie in bed

waiting for the time to come for the folks to get up. Why, he could n't have done more for me if I was his own grandmother! He actually brings in a bowl of water and washes my face and hands, and then he takes my brush and brushes my hair just as handy as a girl. He 's always in such good spirits, it is as good as meat and drink to me."

"It is nice of him. I know the other boys would do as much if they only knew how. I 've always heard that George was very kind to his mother and grandmother. His grandmother had a fall and did something to her hip, and they say he has been very devoted to her."

"He tells me a lot about his grandmother, and I know, from the way he takes hold of me, that he is used to handling sick folks. This morning he brought some new-laid eggs and cooked one of 'em for me. He dropped it into boiling water, and after he 'd dished it up he put a little mite of butter and salt on it, and it tasted splendid."

“He’s one of the kind who does almost everything well. He’s quite ingenious about making things too. But he has cut me out. I don’t see as there is anything left for me to do.”

“No, he done up all the morning chores. Sarah Page, she will be coming along as soon as she gets her breakfast dishes cleared away. She’s been real good to me.”

So Anna took leave of her old friend and reached camp to find them half through breakfast.

“Pray, what is the meaning of this tardiness?” asked George with a frown, as she took her seat at the table.

“I rode over to the village to see old Mrs. Dexter, because I knew I should n’t have time to go this afternoon on account of the sewing-bee.”

“Ahem! I will overlook it this once, but don’t let it happen again. Bread and water and solitary confinement in the dark cell for three hours will be the punishment for the next offence.”

"*You can't say anything. You have been late yourself ever so many times lately.*"

"Business, child, business! Circumstances beyond my control detained me."

"So business detained *me*. 'And isn't my business as important as his'n is?'" she quoted.

"I suppose you went to see Mrs. Dexter," said Sue. "Why didn't you tell me? I would have gone with you."

"It would have been a useless errand. I found somebody had been ahead of me, and had cooked Mrs. Dexter's breakfast and made everything as tidy as possible."

"Sarah Page, I presume; the one she told us was coming to look after her," remarked George, carelessly.

"What are your plans for the afternoon, boys?" asked Mrs. Norton. "We have our sewing-bee, you know, and shall be busy until teatime."

"What do you say to going fishing, boys?" asked Harry. "We'll get Captain Higgins to take us out to the same place he took a

party yesterday. They had great luck, he said."

"I'm agreeable," replied George. "How would you like some rock cod for supper, Mrs. Norton?"

"I should be delighted. You must n't raise our hopes too high, though, because the fish may not bite to-day. You know you can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink."

"True, very true," said George; "but the fish always do bite when their uncle is around."

"How delightful it must be to have such an exalted opinion of one's self!" said Kate.

"I doubt if you are back in time for supper," said Mrs. Norton, "the wind is so uncertain. Your boat may be becalmed."

"Why, are you going in a *boat*?" asked Kate, in surprise.

"People go in a boat when they go sailing, as a general thing," replied George, seriously; "and we shall be obliged to, as there is no air-ship nor balloon in the village."

“It is the first I’ve heard anything about sailing,” said Kate; “you did n’t mention a boat.”

“How did you suppose Captain Higgins was going to take us,—on his back?”

“Nonsense! You know perfectly well what I meant, and you need n’t twist things around so.”

## CHAPTER TWELFTH



HE boys started on their fishing-party soon after breakfast, and after an early dinner the girls assembled in the camp parlor. On the large table lay a whole piece of cotton cloth and a box containing spools of white thread. Mrs. Norton, shears in hand, was standing at the table.

“Now, girls,” she said, “we will begin with underclothing, which is most needed, and which you will probably find least interesting to make. If we had more than one sewing-machine, we could turn out double the amount of work, but so many of us together can do a good deal. Shall I do the cutting? Some of you can baste the seams for the machine, and those who understand machine-sewing can take turns in running the machine.”

Mrs. Norton was so expert in her department that in a short time the basters were at work and the machine running merrily.

"It is strange how easy it is to sew when so many help," said one of the girls. "I just hate to sew by myself, but it is real fun to do it this way."

"Why could n't we do our weekly mending together?" asked another. "It is so tedious to sit down all alone to darn stockings and mend. If we were all doing the same thing, we should n't mind it at all."

"Why not set aside one afternoon in the week to do our mending together?" proposed Mrs. Norton.

"Suppose one gets through in a few minutes and another has ever so much more to do," said Sue; "would n't it be pretty hard on the last ones?"

"No harder than it would be at any other time," replied Kate.

"I would suggest that those who have very little to do should equalize matters by

helping the ones who have the most," said Mrs. Norton.

"Why, so we could; I never thought of it," said the girl who had suggested the plan.

"I should be one of the disinterested workers," said Hattie Haynes, "for my clothes were new throughout when I came."

"And I one of the needy ones," replied Sue, quickly, "for all my clothes were old when I came. I believe I did have a new pair of shoes, but they will not count."

"I didn't even have a new pair of shoes," said Anna; "so you see what you have to expect, girls."

"Anna always stands up for Sue Scudder," whispered Hattie to her neighbor, "but every one can see through it."

"It is a good habit," replied the other; "that's the reason they are so fond of her."

"I call it partiality," responded Hattie.

“Whatever you call it, it is a splendid trait to have. It is refreshing to see a girl who has everything she wants think just as much of those who can’t have nice things.”

“I do like to see a proper amount of self-respect,” said Hattie. “‘Birds of a feather flock together,’ you know, and it is n’t natural for a girl brought up as Anna is to feel at home with people like the Scudders.”

“Self-respect!” echoed the other, contemptuously. “You are a nice one to talk of self-respect! If you’ve forgotten how meanly you acted about Alan Leigh, the rest of us have n’t. Yes, ‘birds of a feather do flock together,’ and I don’t feel comfortable in your society;” and she gathered up her work and crossed the room to join a group of girls on the other side, not knowing in her excitement that she was trailing her spool of thread behind her.

“You look excited,” said one of the girls in the group she joined; “your cheeks are as red as fire and your eyes fairly throw

out sparks. What in the world is the matter?"

"I didn't feel comfortable where I was. Some people have shorter memories than I have, and when I hear them criticise those who are too good to be mentioned in the same breath with them, I can't help reminding them that I haven't forgotten if they have."

"Oh, I see!" replied the other, casting a glance toward Hattie, who was bending over her work with a flushed face. "If I had been in *her* place, any amount of wild horses could n't have dragged me here. She probably thinks we have forgotten about it."

"She found out that I, for one, have n't."

"Neither has Alan. Have not you noticed that he never takes the least notice of her?"

"How could he, under the circumstances? He knows that we are all on his side, however."

"One day I saw them almost run against each other in the doorway of the dining-

hall. He was as cold as an icicle and as stiff as a poker. He looked real contemptuous too. You know he can throw a lot of expression into his face."

"She must have been embarrassed."

"Embarrassed! I should say so! She must have a skin as thick as a rhinoceros to act as she does."

In justice to the girls it must be said that they treated Hattie very well, in spite of their disapproval of her conduct. They were always ready to condone her fault unless she manifested something of the haughty spirit of which they so highly disapproved,—"took on airs," as they expressed it.

As for Alan, the close companionship of the boys and girls brought about such an intimate relation between them all that they were becoming as familiar with one another as the different members of a large family. This was just what the naturally reserved Alan, made more so by his secluded and lonely home life, needed, and he had already

become more genial and responsive. Occasionally, however, events caused him to remember that he was no longer a member of the Harbortown High School, and some bitterness of thought always followed these reminders. Such an educator, however, is happiness that the genial influences about him superseded the unpleasant ones, and he was happier than he had been since his mother's death.

There were moments when Hattie Haynes wished that she had not joined the camping-party. These were when she was painfully reminded that the episode of the note was not forgotten. At first she wished heartily that she had been courageous enough to confess all on the spot, but gradually this feeling withdrew to the background, and only the desire to conceal her fault remained. Thus it is always, unfortunately, with those who do wrong. The conscience that is not heeded loses its force and grows feeble from disuse, while every ingenuity is resorted to in order to conceal the truth.

The sewing-bee accomplished all and more than the most sanguine hopes of the projector had imagined. The fingers of the happy young workers flew rapidly, and their busy tongues kept time to the active fingers.

“They remind me of a hive of bees,” remarked Mrs. Arnold to her daughter, as she listened to the hum of voices around her. “I see that they can work as well as play.”

“Indeed they can — look at this pile of work ready all but the buttons,” answered Mrs. Norton, laying her hands on a pile of garments on the table. “I didn’t think we should do half so much.”

“My grandmother used to say that a good player was generally a good worker,” said her mother, “and our girls are proving it.”

“Here come the boys!” exclaimed one of the girls.

“I don’t believe they caught any fish,” said another, “they look so crestfallen.”

“The boys went a-fishing,  
But they caught no fish,”

sang one of the girls, as the boys stopped before the door.

“They caught as many  
As they did wish,”

responded George quickly, to the same refrain.

“How many did you catch, anyway?” asked Kate.

“Oh, between two and three hundred,” replied George, coolly.

“I don’t believe a word of it,” said Kate.  
“Where are they?”

“Alan,” said George, seriously, “this young lady has delicately intimated that she doubts the truth of my statement. Will you kindly display the fish, that she may count them and satisfy herself?”

Alan gravely deposited on the grass the fishing-basket hung over his shoulders, and opened the cover.

“Just three fishes!” exclaimed Kate.  
“What do you mean by telling us such a story?”

"I told you the truth," replied George.

"You said there were between two and three hundred! Didn't he, girls?"

"He certainly did," responded the chorus of girls.

"Well, and isn't three between two and three hundred?" asked George.

"Oh, what a smart boy! It is impossible to keep pace with him," exclaimed Kate.

"It is fortunate that we didn't rely on your luck," said Mrs. Norton, "or we should have been obliged to forego our supper. The girls will have good appetites after their work, and I think you ought to have too."

"The fact is we didn't strike the right place," said Alan. "It is too bad."

"It is a disappointment to you," said Mrs. Norton, "but I hate to have the poor fishes caught. It seems to me a cruel sport."

"What! if you kill them at once and don't let them die by inches, as the fishermen do?" asked Alan.

"I don't like to think about it, but of course your way is not so bad."

"If you boys could only help us with our work, we could finish in a short time," said Anna.

"I am afraid it would be too much for them, after their efforts in fishing," said Kate.

"Of course we can help," said Harry. "I can run a machine with anybody."

"I can sew anything you give me," said George.

"How is it with you, Alan?" asked Kate.  
"Are you as modest as George is?"

"I can manage to sew on buttons after a fashion."

"Come, boys," said George, "let's wash up and then come back and show the girls what we can do."

In a few moments the boys were back again, demanding work.

"Your fingers are dreadfully in the way of each other," said Sue, after patiently instructing Alan in the art of sewing on buttons. "Why, you don't use your thimble at all."

“What does he want a thimble for?” asked George. “Pull your needle through, the way you see your uncle do.”

“George is so poetical he can’t help expressing himself in verse,” said Kate.

“Have n’t you anything harder than sewing on buttons?” asked George. “Give us something that requires talent. Anybody can sew on buttons.”

“Perhaps you would like to make a few button-holes?”

“Anything you say. It is immaterial to me. Bring on your button-holes.”

“You need n’t pretend that you can make button-holes, because I know it is impossible for a boy to know how, and I don’t care to have my nice little nightgown spoiled.”

“Spoiled! Well, I like that! Come, hand it over!”

“No,” said Kate, holding her hands behind her; “you can make one first on one of these pieces of cloth, and then we’ll decide if you are competent.”

"I couldn't think of submitting to such degrading conditions," said George.

"I should n't be surprised if he did know how," said Anna. "He can cook, so perhaps he can sew."

"Suppose you let him practise on your work," said Kate, "since you have such confidence in his ability."

"I don't mind. Here, George, show us what you can do on this, but be very careful. I will cut it out, because I am very particular to have it just fit the button, or the poor child who wears it will be uncomfortable."

"First of all," said Kate, "you must overcast it, then bar it three times. Then your button-hole is ready to be worked."

"Listen, boys, for you may never have another such opportunity to learn how to make button-holes. First overcast and bar your button-hole; and when you have made it, then you can cut it out."

"I didn't say any such thing," retorted Kate. "I supposed you had sense enough

to cut it out before you began to make it. I gave you credit for a little grain of common sense, but I see that I overestimated you."

"That's a fact. I've often been told that I hadn't any," replied George, with the utmost good nature, as he began his work.

"I'm glad that it is not the garment I am responsible for," said Kate.

"Don't you worry. Wait till I'm through and then you'll know more than you did before, perhaps."

"See him pull his thread through with his thumb and finger!" exclaimed Kate.

George made no reply, but kept on with his work, and was so engrossed in it that he was apparently unconscious of the group watching his rather peculiar method of sewing. Meanwhile Harry was at the machine, working it with such velocity that the girl superintending his work gave a little scream every time he neared the end of a seam, fearing he could not stop in time. Alan was laboriously sewing on buttons, and the





other boys succeeded in making themselves useful.

"I can't say much for your speed in turning off work," said Anna, "but it is a consolation to know that every little helps."

"Harry makes up in speed what the others lose," said the girl who was anxiously superintending the sewing-machine work. "He sews about an inch after he has finished the seam. He reminds me of the man who was shingling his barn in a fog and when it cleared he found that he had shingled several feet out into the fog."

"How are you getting on with your button-hole?" called out Harry, when he stopped a moment to take breath.

"I'm all right," responded George; "don't you fret about me."

"Do you intend to be through by supper-time?" asked Anna.

"It depends upon what time you have supper," replied George, screwing up his face as he pulled his needle through a particularly hard place.

"At the rate you are going, I should say you might be through by the middle of next week," said Harry, as he started on another seam.

"See how industrious Alan has been," said Sue. "He has sewed on six buttons all by himself."

"Impossible!" exclaimed George. "I can't believe it! Let him try his hand at this thing."

"No, thank you," replied Alan, "I'll leave the fancy touches to you."

"There," exclaimed George, after a few minutes of silent work; "look at this, will you? The little chap that has the good luck to get this garment will be all right on button-holes."

They all crowded around to inspect the work, while George took out his handkerchief and went through the motions of mopping his brow and fanning himself with it.

"You have certainly been very industrious," said Anna, while she closely inspected the work.

“How doth the little busy bee improve each shining hour

In making button-holes all day, the best that are in his power,”

quoted George, solemnly.

“The quotation is very appropriate; he would make a cunning little bee,” remarked Kate.

“The bees must stop work now and go in to supper,” said Mrs. Norton, as the bugle call was heard.

“A grain of sand and a drop of dew are all that I require,” remarked George, sentimentally, as he rose and stretched his tall proportions.

“Wait till you see him eat his half-dozen baked potatoes and other things to match,” said Alan.

“Don’t exaggerate, it is a bad habit,” said Kate. “I want to do him justice, he is so careful in his remarks about other people. He ate only four last night, and the largest wasn’t any bigger than a good-sized cantaloupe.”

“If you require assistance after your arduous labors, we will carry you over,” said Harry.

“It is not necessary,” replied George. “I shall skip from blade to blade of grass;” and he reached the dining-hall in such long strides that he was the first to arrive there.

## CHAPTER THIRTEENTH



THE morning Alan appeared at the breakfast-table with a bunch of blueberry sprays laden with berries. These he presented to Mrs. Norton, remarking that he had discovered a pasture where they grew in great profusion. It was a beautiful spot, he said, on the other side of the Point. The sight of the bright berries, with their delicate, misty bloom, elicited much enthusiasm from all the party, and the chaperon deposited a spray at each plate.

“They remind me of my childhood and the good times I used to have when we went blueberrying,” she said. “We used to make up a party and be gone all day. No other berries ever tasted so good as those we picked ourselves. We lived on blueberry

cake and pie for a long time afterward, but we never became tired of them."

"The place where these grew would be a fine spot for a picnic," said Alan. "The pasture slopes down to the shore, and there is a beautiful grove directly on the edge of it. It was so cool and pleasant there, it occurred to me what a fine place it would be for a picnic."

"Oh, Mrs. Norton, can't we get up a blueberrying party some day, and take our lunch with us and eat it in the grove by the sea?" exclaimed Kate Lawson, enthusiastically.

"And think how nice the blueberries we picked ourselves would taste!" exclaimed another.

"Oh, do say yes!" cried another. "I have always wanted to go berrying."

"I am sure I should enjoy it as much as any of you," replied the chaperon. "The sight of the berries has made me want to try my hand at picking them once more."

"How soon can we go? To-morrow?" asked Kate.

"Why not to-day?" said Mrs. Norton. "It is not very warm, and it may not be so pleasant to-morrow. The worst thing about it is making sandwiches, but if you will all help it will not take long."

"And we will help too," said Harry.

The party did not linger so long at the breakfast-table that morning as was their custom, and the housework was done up in an incredibly short time. The dining-hall presented a gay and lively appearance with its chattering group of workers. Some of the boys cut slices of bread, because they could cut them thinner and more even than the girls, while others buttered them and put in a layer of ham or slices of hard-boiled eggs. Cheese sandwiches and olive sandwiches were also made, while the cook and Mrs. Norton packed a basket of other viands, with a generous contribution from Mrs. Arnold's private stores. So many workers proceeding in a systematic manner produced

great results, and it was not long before the party was ready to start. The boys took possession of the heavy baskets of food, and every available dish that could be found in the camp pantry, and in Mrs. Arnold's as well, was appropriated by the enthusiastic pickers. Goggles, of course, headed the party, and as Fritz was taken to assist in the care of the picnic table, little Stilts, at Fritz's earnest solicitation, was allowed to accompany them.

The puppy, who every day waxed longer of leg and shorter and coarser of hair, was thrown into such a state of excitement at this unusual occurrence, that he ran around in a frenzied condition, snapping at every loose stone and stick that lay in his path, and worrying it so ferociously that some of the more timid of the girls who were unaccustomed to the ways of puppies thought him to be seized with symptoms of hydrophobia and retreated behind their bolder neighbors whenever he came too near. After a while, however, he seized on a large branch

and dragged it after him until he was completely exhausted, after which he quieted down and behaved like a sensible puppy, trotting demurely by the side of Goggles, who took very little notice of him, however.

“Goggles looks as if he were ashamed to be seen in the puppy’s company,” said Anna; “and I don’t wonder at it, when he behaves in such an insane manner.”

“He watches him, though, out of the corner of his eye,” said George, “and you may be sure if he were attacked by a big dog or got into any difficulty, Goggles would be on hand. He always reminds me, when he is with little dogs, of a big brother looking out for a younger one. He pretends he is not watching him, but as soon as the little shaver gets into trouble he comes to the rescue.”

The road lay through groves of stunted pines for the first part of the way, and the party followed a path made by the farm wagons. This led finally to more open pastures with the short grass and numerous

stones with which New England pastures abound. Piles of these stones showed that some attempt at clearing had been made. These pastures were bordered by woods, in the shade of which the cattle could find relief from the hot mid-day sun. The berrying party passed many groups of cattle, some cropping the short grass and others lying down in the shade contentedly chewing their cuds, or standing knee-deep in some shady pool, patiently whisking the flies off with their long tasselled tails.

“I hope Mr. Burnham’s bull is n’t among those cows,” remarked Kate as they passed one of the groups. “They say he is dreadfully fierce.”

“Kate wants to know if one of those cows is Mr. Burnham’s bull,” called out George to those in the rear of the party.

“She does n’t want to know any such thing,” replied Kate. “It is one of George’s very original remarks.”

“No, indeed,” said Mrs. Norton; “he keeps him at home, he told me so, and these cows

are perfectly gentle, so we need n't have any anxiety about them."

"I saw the bull this morning when I was here," said Alan. "He is a handsome fellow, but he looks pretty dangerous. He pawed the ground well when he saw me, and bellowed in a pretty savage way, but he could n't get at me."

"Where was he?" asked one of the girls, casting uneasy glances behind her as she spoke, as if she expected to see the bull in pursuit.

"You need n't be afraid, he was n't anywhere near here. He was in a paddock back of Mr. Burnham's barn and could n't get out. It was amusing to see him come to the edge of his paddock and look over at me as if I had no right to look at him."

"He came very near killing a man on the farm once," said Harry.

"How?" cried Alan.

"Oh, don't tell about it!" said Kate. "I shall expect to hear him bellowing after us at any moment."

A low rumbling noise, a very good imitation of a bull, was heard from the rear of the party.

“Oh, don’t do that!” cried Kate, nervously. “Do wait till we are safely by these cows, and then you can play bull as much as you like.”

“I’ll reserve my story till then, too,” said Harry, “for it is very tragic.”

The pasture where the berries grew in such profusion was now quite near, and in a short time they reached it. The grove of which Alan had spoken was beautifully situated, overlooking a rocky shore and cooled by the fresh sea-breezes. On one side of a large rock they deposited the baskets containing the luncheon, and leaving Fritz to watch over them and his charge, the puppy, they set forth to find the berries. They had gone but a short distance when they came upon patches of blueberry bushes laden with large ripe berries. They had but to put their pails under the bushes and strip the branches into them.

"I don't see why these beautiful berries have n't been discovered before," cried one of the pickers, "they are such unusually fine ones."

"They grow in almost every pasture," replied Mrs. Norton, "and are considered public property. There is no market for them in the village, because the people can have them for the picking. It is only the summer residents who buy them."

"They are such clean, reliable berries," said one of the girls. "You can never be sure of raspberries, they have such nice hiding-places for bugs and worms."

"It is fortunate I did n't make that remark," said Kate. "It would have been construed into something very ridiculous, and yet it is a very sensible remark."

"You would probably have expressed it in more poetical language," replied Harry, "and we are a very practical set."

"My! how slowly you have picked!" exclaimed Kate, as she caught sight of his pail. "Your pail is n't half full, and mine

is almost full. So are the other girls'. I suspect you have eaten more than you have picked."

"Girls always pick more than boys, they are so much more conscientious," said Anna.

"I spilled half of mine," said George, "and Harry trod on them."

"You always have an excuse ready, I notice," said Kate.

"How about you?"

"I let plain facts speak for themselves. For instance, if my mouth looked as blue as yours, I should expect people to conclude that I had been eating blueberries."

"Fortunately, the berries are so plentiful that we shall have plenty to spare," said Mrs. Norton.

By the time they were ready to return to the lunch-baskets and prepare the table, every dish was filled to the brim and but a small portion of the bushes stripped of their fruit. They found everything as they had left it, and Goggles keeping guard over the baskets of provisions, while Fritz and

the puppy were disporting themselves after their custom.

A flat spot was selected, and the cloth laid. Some of the boys brought water from a neighboring spring, while the girls arranged the food in as attractive a way as possible. A bunch of wild roses served as a centre-piece, and sprays of the same lovely flower were tastefully arranged on the white cloth. The exercise of walking and picking had stimulated the appetites of the party, and they seated themselves around the tempting board at the first intimation that the repast was served. Goggles, always dignified, seated himself in a position convenient to receive the morsels he knew would fall to his share, and not a movement of the party escaped his notice.

The puppy, Stilts, on the contrary, evinced no such delicacy of feeling, but made a circuit of the table, poking his little black nose over each one's shoulder in turn, to remind them that he was present, and even going so far as to attempt to help himself when the

attention of the party was diverted from him.

"How nice it would be if we could eat our dinner out of doors every day!" remarked one of the girls, after they had eaten in silence for a few minutes. "It is astonishing how different everything tastes in the fresh air."

"For instance," said George, as he helped himself from a dish that stood before him, "this slice of brown bread tastes as good in this fine air as real cake would indoors."

"My mother would feel complimented to have you mistake her rich fruit cake for brown bread," replied Anna. "Can't you see the raisins and citron in it? I should think you would wait until you are through with the sandwiches before you begin on the dessert."

"I thought they were to be eaten at the same time," replied George, as he helped himself to another slice of cake. "What's the reason you put them on the table together if you didn't mean for us to eat them together?"

“Because it was more convenient than it would have been to have dinner in courses. We supposed you would use your judgment in eating.”

“Now for the bull story you wanted to tell us,” said Kate. “We are out of his reach here and can give our undivided attention to it.”

“It is a short story, but I will tell you the situations, and your imaginations will have to supply the rest. It was when the bull was very young,—not more than two years old, I fancy,—and he was a handful to manage, I can tell you. Mr. Burnham usually took care of him, for he was the only one on the farm who could manage him. He had brought him up from a calf and wasn’t afraid of him, and the bull knew he was his master. When he was unusually vicious, he used to put a ring in his nose and lead him by that. It didn’t go through his nose the way some bulls have them, but it fitted tight enough to hurt him if he pulled away.”

"How cruel!" exclaimed Sue. "I think it is dreadful to treat the poor things so."

"They can't do anything with them without something of the kind," replied Harry. "You have no idea of the fury an angry bull can work himself into. Well, for my story. Mr. Burnham had always taken care of the bull and never had any trouble with him; but once he was taken suddenly ill, and there was the bull in his paddock, with nobody daring to go near him."

"Could n't they give him his food and keep at a distance?" asked Kate.

"Yes, they could do that; but it was cold winter weather, with two or three feet of snow on the ground, and the bull was in an open paddock, quite a distance from the barn. They threw in hay to him and put in a pail of water, and the bull was contented enough through the day. As soon as the sun went down, though, and it began to grow dark and cold, he began to grow restless, and walked back and forth in his paddock, lowing for his master to come and take him in."

“I believe if any one had had the courage to go to him and take him to the barn he would have gone quietly with him,—animals understand so well when people help them,” said Alan.

“Wait till I finish my story, and you will see just how grateful a bull can be. As I said, it grew dark and cold, and the darker and colder it grew the more uneasy the bull got, until at last they said he bellowed so loud you could have heard him as far as the village, and every little while he would stop and paw the ground until the snow flew in showers. You can imagine how uncomfortable poor Mr. Burnham felt lying in bed, for he is awfully kind-hearted, and it drove him almost wild to think of the poor bull left out in that freezing weather all night. ‘I never went back on him before,’ he kept saying, as he listened to the deep bellows.

“At last one of the hands, a young fellow of about eighteen or twenty, made up his mind that he would make the attempt to

release the poor fellow, but all the other men made such a fuss about it, saying that it was n't worth while to risk his life for a dumb beast that would probably kill him for his pains, and trying to persuade him that it was not cold enough to hurt the bull, that he gave up the idea and went to bed. He was a soft-hearted fellow, and he could n't get to sleep while those mournful bellowings sounded in his ears. The wind went around to the north, too, and it grew colder and colder, and at last, when the other men were all asleep and snoring, this young fellow got up without making any noise, and stole out of the room. They all slept in a large, unfinished attic, and I imagine the temperature there was n't very much higher than it was out of doors. So he slipped down stairs and got out of the house without anybody's knowing it. By this time the bull had worked himself into a perfect frenzy, and was just tearing up and down like mad, sometimes charging at the boards that fenced him in, and trying

to rip them down with his horns. As soon as he saw the young fellow coming toward him he tore up to the bars and waited for him. It never occurred to the fellow that the bull would n't make a rush for his barn as soon as the bars were down. He must have been beside himself with rage, for instead of making for the barn he lowered his head and made straight for his deliverer. The young fellow did n't have so much as a stick in his hand, and it would n't have done any good if he had, for he would have been no match for an enraged bull. The barn was too far for him to think of running to it, so he did the only thing left for him to do. As the bull came at him he sprang back into the paddock, hoping to get up the bars before the bull could get in. There was not time for that, however; so he waited, facing the creature, and as the bull lowered his head at him, he made a grab for his nose, seized it between the nostrils, and then hung on like grim death. Then began the most fearful struggle between

the two. He knew it was certain death if he let go his hold, so the two went around and around the paddock as long as the man's strength held out. Just imagine what that man must have suffered, knowing that there was not a soul to come to his rescue until daylight! The last part of the time he held out by sheer force of will, and when the men awoke (fortunately they are early risers on farms) and found his bed empty, they thought something was wrong and hurried out to look for him. It was the most terrible sight you ever saw. The young fellow was so far gone he could just manage to keep his hold on the bull's nostrils, and the bull was at one moment lifting him off the ground and then bringing him down again, trying to crush the life out of him. He had almost succeeded, for when they rescued him he was mashed and battered almost to a jelly, and went into a dead faint. He was in the hospital all the rest of that winter, and he has never been the same since."

There was silence on all sides when Harry ended his story, and he was as impressed by it as were his hearers. After a pause Alan remarked, drawing a deep breath, "What pluck that fellow must have had to hang on all night!"

"He said he could n't either think or feel the last part of the time," said Harry. "He said he seemed to hear a voice that kept saying to him, 'Hang on! Hang on!' and he said he just hung on for all he was worth."

"What a terrible story!" said Kate. "I shall be more afraid of bulls than ever now."

"There is n't much chance of your ever coming into contact with one," said Alan, "for they are always kept where they can't do any harm."

A noise from behind caused them to look around suddenly, some of the more nervous of the girls starting violently, as if the bull of which they had been talking were upon them.

"It is only Mr. Burnham," said Sue, in a tone of intense relief. "I thought it was the bull."

## CHAPTER FOURTEENTH



OU appear to be having quite a social time," remarked Mr. Burnham, when he reached the party. "I guess you're having a picnic, are n't you?"

"Yes. We've been trespassing on your grounds, I believe, and here is the result," replied Mrs. Norton, displaying a pail of blueberries as she spoke.

"You're welcome to all you've a mind to pick. Blueberries are public property, you know. As for me, I'd rather pump thunder at five cents a clap than pick a dish of 'em."

"Will you not share our lunch with us?" asked Mrs. Norton. "It will make us feel better about picking your berries."

"I don't mind if I do take just a bite. I've been looking after my fences and stone

walls, and feel a grain beat. I expect dinner's over up to the house."

A place was at once made for the guest, and he was helped bountifully to the good things on the table.

"I'll be obliged to you for a glass of that water," he said, after he had eaten a few mouthfuls. "I'm as dry as a contribution box. I'd give a good deal to have that spring a little nigher my farm," he added, as he drained his glass.

"It is delicious water, and the spring large enough to supply a whole town," replied Mrs. Norton.

"Where is the puppy, Fritz?" asked Anna, suddenly. "I have n't seen him for ever so long. I hope he has n't strayed off."

"You don't need to give yourself any uneasiness about the pup," replied the farmer. "He's all right. I see him on the leeward of that big rock over there, and he was doing his best to get outside nigh half a leg of ham."

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Anna, "he will kill

himself! You can't trust him a minute." She started toward the rock, but the agile Fritz was before her, and returned bringing the puppy, who was engaged in swallowing a piece of meat much out of proportion to his size, and endeavoring to dispose of it before it could be taken from him.

"He have eat one whole piece of meat already," explained Fritz, as the puppy with a great effort, that caused much blinking of his bright little eyes and many contortions of his ape-like face, succeeded in swallowing his huge mouthful.

"What will it do to him?" exclaimed Anna, in dismay.

"Nothing more than a fit of indigestion," replied George. "He's one of the tough kind."

"He's as great a trial to me as the old man of the sea was to Sinbad!" said Anna. "I shall have to keep him as long as he lives, for nobody else would be bothered with him."

"He'll get sense by and by," said the

farmer. "Pups don't know anything till they get grown up."

"His kind will never get sense," replied Anna, decidedly.

The object of their remarks seemed to be wholly unmoved by them. When Fritz set him on the ground, he joined Goggles, who was reposing quietly under a tree, and lay down close by his side. Goggles, however, without bestowing even a glance on him, arose with great dignity and retired to a short distance, where he again lay down.

"It is amusing to see how much superior to the puppy Goggles feels," said Anna. "It is true aristocracy, and he can't help showing that the puppy's common ways annoy him. The puppy has so little sensibility that his feelings are not injured by Goggles' behavior, so it is hopeless to expect him to profit by it."

"Oh, he'll come out all right," said the farmer, consolingly.

"If he doesn't burst first," said Harry. "He reminds me of an anaconda that swal-

lows a sheep whole and takes six weeks to digest it in."

"Would n't it be convenient if all animals ate on that principle!" said Anna. "Just think how nice it would be to have to feed them only every six weeks."

"If Stilts recovers from this meal," said George, "you might try the experiment with him. He certainly will not want anything more to eat for at least a week."

"To change the subject," remarked Mrs. Norton, "this is one of the most beautiful spots on the Point, Mr. Burnham. Some day somebody will be wanting it to put up a fine summer residence. The sea view is very picturesque here, with those wooded islands between here and the open sea."

"Yes; it would make a pretty enough picture, but it's a terrible dangerous coast for vessels. It was right out there that the fishing schooner went to pieces ten years ago next autumn."

"That was the time Captain Higgins saved the lives of several sailors, was n't

it? I wish you would tell us about it, for he is too modest to talk about his own exploits."

"Yes; he done nobly that day. I ain't much of a story-teller, but I'll relate the plain facts, and you can supply the fancy touches yourselves. 'T was one of the line storms, and one morning early we was all waked by hearing the guns going off. It's about the mournfullest sound I know of to hear the guns of a vessel in distress. It is astonishing how different they sound from other guns, like celebrating the Fourth, for instance, or saluting. We all knew right off what it meant, so we all followed the sound, and by the time I got around, there was quite a crowd collected down there on the shore. There she was, a two-masted fishing-schooner, but one mast was gone and the foretop of the other carried away, and she was a-pounding against that ledge you see running out from that furthest island. You could n't see it then, for the waves was dashing over it. They dashed

clear over the vessel, too, every once in a while. I tell you, 't was the awfullest sight, seeing those poor fellows looking to us to save them, and we standing here helpless, watching that little schooner pounding her life out against that ledge. After a while Cap'n Higgins, he did n't say nothing to nobody, but he just went up the beach a piece, and pretty soon we see him coming along tugging a skiff after him.

“‘You don’t mean to say you’re a-going to venture out in that egg-shell in such a sea as this?’ I hollered close to his ear, for the wind and sea together made such a noise we couldn’t hear one another talk in our usual voices.

“‘Yes, I be,’ he hollered back; and then he dragged his skiff down to the water’s edge.

“‘You’re going to your death,’ somebody called out to him.

“‘So be those fellows,’ he answered back, p’inting solemnly toward the schooner that was thumping up and down as hard as ever.

“With that he gave a push to his skiff and jumped in her, and off he started. I tell you, our hearts was in our mouths as we watched him. The sea ran so high that one minute we see the skiff on top of a big wave, and then she’d go out of sight and we’d think she’d gone clean to the bottom. He managed to keep her out of the trough of the sea, and he did succeed in reaching the wreck. The skiff was so small she could only carry one besides the cap’n, and if you’ll believe it, that man went back and forth five times and fetched away a man every time. They was so exhausted from exposure that they could n’t stand when they reached the shore.”

“Were all of the crew saved?” asked Alan.

“That was the worst of it,” replied the farmer, with a deep sigh. “Cap’n Higgins, he started on his sixth trip, but when he was about half-way over, we see the schooner go to pieces and the two men on board went down with her. The cap’n, he braced up as

long as there was work to be done, but what with the exertion and the disappointment at not being able to save those two men, he give out completely and could n't hardly get the skiff back to shore."

"I suppose the captain was one of the two who were left," said Alan.

"Yes, the cap'n and the first mate. The cap'n was from the village here, Cap'n Dexter, and his widow is still living."

"Why, it's our Mrs. Dexter!" said Anna, "and a dear old soul she is, too."

"Yes, she's about as good as they make 'em," replied the farmer, "and she's seen a sight of trouble in her day. However, I must n't waste any more time setting, though it's more agreeable than the work that's waiting for me to home."

"Thank you very much for your story," said Mrs. Norton, "it was very interesting. Harry had been telling us about your bull attacking one of your men just as you came."

"Oh, yes! the time he went for Bill

Eaton! 'T was a dreadful thing, and Bill will never be what he was before. His spine was awfully injured, I expect. 'T was a brave thing for him to do, and I feel that I owe him a living for it, if he gets so that he can't do any work."

The two tragic stories they had just heard had the effect of throwing the young picnickers into a serious frame of mind, and they gathered together the dishes and packed the baskets with very little conversation. Before they had gone very far on their homeward way, however, their customary spirits had returned, and their merry voices and happy laughter rang out as freely as if there were no such things as enraged bulls and disastrous shipwrecks.

"There is one thing that troubles me," said Mrs. Norton to her mother, a few days later, "and yet I can hardly remedy it. You must have noticed the feeling between Hattie Haynes and the other girls. I can see their manner to her is not as it used to be, and the boys show the same feeling.

It worried me a great deal, and I was on the point of drawing the attention of the girls to it, when I saw Hattie and Alan Leigh accidentally left alone together. She was so embarrassed and he so coldly polite that in a moment the truth flashed into my mind."

"I have seen it, too, and it is impossible not to understand that she is the cause of his dismissal from school. I didn't know before who it was, and I was hoping that the companionship of the other young people would have a softening influence on the culprit, and lead her to set matters straight. I wish she would confide in you!"

"I wish she would, too, but I don't see any prospect of it. The girl must be wretched, and if the slightest chance for confidence offers, I shall seize on it."

"It will have to come soon, if it comes at all," replied Mrs. Arnold, "for vacation will be over before we know it, and poor Alan will still be an outcast. I have some hope, though. You remember that I asked Mr. Stearns to pass a week with us. It has

just occurred to me that he will see the state of affairs for himself. I don't see how he can help it."

"If he doesn't, I shall do what I can to open his eyes. Alan was always a favorite with him, and I can't understand how he could judge him so hastily."

"Appearances were against him," said Mrs. Arnold. "Well, we shall see what this visit will bring about."

A few days after this conversation, Mrs. Norton found the much-desired opportunity. One afternoon when the girls had gone to sit on Mrs. Arnold's cool piazza to do their weekly mending while Mrs. Arnold read aloud to them, Mrs. Norton saw, with surprise, that Hattie Haynes was not one of the number. To her inquiries the girls returned very unsatisfactory answers, and she instinctively felt that something was wrong. She hurried back to the camp, and glancing at the rooms occupied by the girls, found that the door of Hattie's room was closed. Her sympathetic ear caught

the sound of suppressed weeping, and she instantly knocked on the door. There was no response, but dead silence followed. In another moment she knocked again, with the same result.

“Let me in, dear,” she said; “I want very much to see you.”

The sound from within of a chair hurriedly pushed back was heard, and steps approached the door, which was thrown open.

One glance at the face before her convinced Mrs. Norton that the task she had undertaken was not an easy one, but she possessed the tact that springs from a kind heart, and was resolved not to give up the mission she had undertaken. Hattie’s eyes were red from weeping, but tears had not brought about a softened state of mind, judging from the indifferent expression of countenance with which she confronted her visitor.

“I found you were not with the girls, so I came to see if you were not feeling well or — happy,” said Mrs. Norton.

"I am very well and happy, thank you," replied the girl, indifferently. She still stood at the door and offered no invitation to her visitor to enter.

"Come into the parlor with me," said Mrs. Norton. "We can talk there without fear of being disturbed." She led the way to a lounge that stood in a secluded corner and drew the girl to a seat beside her.

"I don't want to force your confidence," she said, laying her hand on the one that lay in the girl's lap and that offered no response to her kind touch; "but, you see, I feel responsible for the girls in my charge, and I can't bear to see any of you in trouble without offering to help you."

"I'm not in any trouble," replied the girl. "Who said I was?"

"Nobody has said a word to me about you, but I can see for myself. I remember how I used to feel when I was a girl and was unhappy."

"Were they all down on you ever, as they are on me? Did they say such hateful

things to you that you wished you were dead and out of the way?" asked the girl, with a slight quiver in her voice.

"If they had, I should have been glad for a friend to confide in and comfort me," replied Mrs. Norton, as she put her arm around the girl and drew her gently toward her. "Come, dear Hattie, don't send me away."

"If I should tell you what is troubling me, you would never want to speak to me again. You would hate me as much as the other girls do," said Hattie, breaking down completely.

"You don't know me, dear, if you think that. I am in such sympathy with young girls that nothing they could tell me would make me cast them off. The greater the wrong they had done, the more they would need my friendship."

"Oh, Mrs. Norton, you don't know how wretched I am! I am the girl who was the cause of Alan Leigh's being expelled from school!" and Hattie buried her face

on Mrs. Norton's shoulder and burst into violent weeping.

Mrs. Norton let Hattie cry for a while in silence, while she gently stroked her hair. She knew this outburst of grief would soften her heart and tend to bring her to repentance. "Poor child, how you must have suffered?" she said gently.

"Suffered!" exclaimed Hattie through her sobs. "I have n't had a moment's peace of mind since. I wanted to own up at first, but I didn't have the courage, and then the girls were all down on me and said such hateful things to me that it seemed to harden me. After a while I was determined I would n't give in."

"Would n't you feel happier, dear, if you confessed all and were on the same terms with the boys and girls that you used to be?"

"Why, of course I should; but it is too late now."

"No, dear, it is never too late to do the right thing. It will be hard, all the

harder for putting it off so long, but you will find they will be generous to you."

"I am not so sure of that. They think I have done the meanest thing that ever a girl did, and I don't blame them."

"It was a weakness on your part, Hattie, but I am sure they can understand that some natures are more fearless than others and find it easier to assert themselves. You may be sure they will not be vindictive."

"Oh, I can't bear the disgrace of owning up before them all!" exclaimed Hattie, burying her face in her hands.

"It is only necessary for you to speak to Alan and then explain matters to Mr. Stearns," said Mrs. Norton, soothingly. "Just think how relieved you will be to have it over!"

"I will try to," replied Hattie; "I can't stand this condition of affairs much longer."

"If I can help you about it, I will. Only don't put it off, for vacation will be over before you know it, and Alan must be exonerated before then. It distresses my mother

and me to know that our young people are not in perfect sympathy, for we felt that something was wrong."

"Did n't Anna tell you about me?" asked Hattie, in surprise.

"Not a word. She told us about Alan's dismissal, but did not mention the name of the girl."

"Well, I call that honorable!" exclaimed Hattie. "I wish I had her courage. I should n't have brought all this misery on myself if I had."

"We are not all alike, you know. What is hard for one is easier for another. You have a conscience, though, dear, and I am sure you will do the right thing. Now come and join the others. They will wonder what has become of both of us."

"I feel happier already to think I have told you, Mrs. Norton."

"And you will feel happier yet when you have made a clean breast of it."

## CHAPTER FIFTEENTH



ATTIE HAYNES went to bed that night with a lighter heart than she had known for many weeks. She was so much more like her former self that the girls remarked on it and wondered what could have brought about the change.

“Hattie acts as if she had made things right with Alan,” remarked one of the girls to her room-mate that night. “I wonder if she has.”

“I don’t believe it,” returned the other. “If she didn’t have the courage to confess at once, I don’t believe she would do it at this late hour.”

“Perhaps her conscience has been working, and she has made up her mind to do the right thing. They say, you know, that

criminals often are made so unhappy by their pangs of conscience that they are driven to confess in sheer desperation."

"I know they say so, but I don't believe it. My opinion is they brood over their misery so much that at last they really believe themselves martyrs. Hattie acts as if she considered herself dreadfully persecuted."

"Why, what a misanthrope you are! I had no idea of it. Well, we'll agree to differ, and see which of us is right. I believe that Hattie has either confessed or made up her mind to do so."

"And I believe she has no idea of doing any such thing. She and Mrs. Norton have been quite chummy of late, and my opinion is that Hattie thinks the affair will be forgotten."

"Well, we'll see. We shall know soon, whichever way it is."

Now that Hattie had worked her courage to the point of apologizing to Alan, as the first step towards atonement, she was on the lookout for a favorable opportunity.

This must be when they could be alone, without any fear of interruption. Such an opportunity did not present itself for several days, but at last it came.

Alan possessed considerable mechanical skill, and made himself useful in many ways. One morning he was employed in repairing the dining-room table, and Hattie, who had closely followed his movements since her conversation with Mrs. Norton, determined to take advantage of the situation. Now that the moment was at hand, she felt much trepidation, and her heart beat loudly within her as she entered the dining-hall. Alan was seated on the floor with his back towards the door as she entered, and was whistling softly to himself while he worked. When he heard footsteps behind him, he turned quickly around with a smile. His was one of those mobile faces whose expression changes with every mood, and as he looked up smiling, with his cheeks flushed and his bright, dark eyes glowing, Hattie's mind quickly reverted to the day when he gave

her back her note, and it was hard to realize that the dark, stern face that confronted her then was the same one that was before her now. The instant Alan recognized Hattie, his expression quickly changed to the hard, stern one he always showed to her. She realized that this was a bad beginning for the ordeal before her, but she made an effort to broach the subject.

"You did not expect to see me, I am afraid," began Hattie, timidly.

"No, I did not. You were the very last person I expected to see," replied Alan, bluntly.

"It has made me feel very bad to see how you have avoided me since we have been here," said Hattie, feeling that she must say what she had to say quickly, for Alan was gathering his tools together as if he intended to take his departure.

"It must have made you very unhappy, you have shown so much consideration for me," returned Alan, contemptuously, as he sprang to his feet and left the room before Hattie could find a word to answer.

For an instant she sat without moving, so crushed was she by this harsh rebuff. Then a torrent of mortified pride and indignation swept over her, and starting to her feet she rushed from the room, struggling hard to keep back the tears as she strode angrily toward her own room. As she rushed by a group of her companions without heeding their presence, they looked at one another in amazement, wondering what her strange manner could mean. When she reached the privacy of her own room, the storm burst forth, and she gave vent to her feelings in a violent fit of weeping.

"How contemptuous!" she exclaimed angrily. "He must have known what I came for! I will not humiliate myself again, not for fifty Mrs. Nortons! I don't care if he *is* expelled! It serves him right! He is a hard, unfeeling wretch, and I never, never, *never* will speak to him again!"

To do Alan justice, he had not the remotest idea that Hattie had sought an interview in order to apologize for her conduct.

It never occurred to him that, as she refused the opportunity he offered her when he gave her back her note, she could ever have the courage to face the consequences of her wrongdoing. He thought she was trying to smooth matters over, and he was determined to show her that she had forfeited his esteem and that he could never feel toward her as he did toward the other girls.

"She will find out that she can't bring me around quite so easily as she imagined," he said to himself, as he left the dining-hall.

Mrs. Norton's quick perceptions caused her to realize that her plan was not working as well as she had hoped, and she was disappointed and surprised to find Hattie in such a stubborn frame of mind. Hattie assured her that she had hardly begun her apology when Alan retorted in a violent and contemptuous manner and had left her.

"There must be some mistake, I am sure," said Mrs. Norton. "Alan could n't have understood what you meant."

"He is neither deaf nor blind," replied Hattie, bitterly. "Oh, yes, he understood fast enough! I never saw anybody look so contemptuous and vindictive!"

"It isn't possible he could have understood what you meant, dear. A boy who acted so chivalrously as he did, never in the world could refuse to accept an apology from a girl."

"He is just as vindictive and revengeful as an Indian," replied Hattie, vehemently. "I know I acted like a coward, but I don't think it was half so bad as it is to humiliate people in such a cold-blooded way as he does."

"Even if it is as you think," said Mrs. Norton, soothingly, "of course it will not deter you from explaining matters to the teacher. You will do what you think is right, and let Alan justify his conduct to his own conscience."

"No, Mrs. Norton, I will not go any further in the matter," replied Hattie, decidedly. "It was very hard for me to speak

to Alan, and I am not going to put myself in a position to be snubbed again."

"Oh, Hattie, don't talk like that. In fact, it is better for us not to discuss the matter any more just now, dear. Wait until you are in a calmer mood, and I am certain that your sense of justice will lead you to do the right thing."

Mrs. Norton, however, was not in her heart as hopeful as her words implied, but she wisely decided to wait for future developments and to lose no opportunity to assist in bringing matters to a favorable close.

That evening the young people were driven in-doors by a severe thunder-storm, and amused themselves by dancing in the dining-hall. Mrs. Norton played for them, and after a few dances she noticed that all were on the floor but one couple, a boy and a girl, and these two happened to be Alan Leigh and Hattie Haynes. She understood at once how it happened, that Alan, who was always rather slow in securing a

partner, had found that Hattie was the only girl left, and was not willing to dance with her. She also knew that Hattie was left out because she was not so popular as she once was. Several girls were dancing together, as they often did, and none of the gay dancers seemed to notice the embarrassing situation of the two who were left out.

Mrs. Norton, still continuing to play, signalled to Alan to come to her. He at once crossed the room and stood by her side.

"Hattie has no partner for this dance; do take a few turns with her," she said.

"I don't feel like dancing this time," he answered in as indifferent a tone as he could assume.

"What, not if I ask you to?" she said.

"If it will please *you*, yes, I will," he answered, and at once he crossed to where Hattie was sitting watching the dancers. "Will you dance this waltz with me?" he asked.

"Thank you, I don't care to dance this time," she replied with a toss of her head. A deep flush came over his face as he turned on his heel and left her.

"Foolish girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Norton to herself. "It is hopeless to expect anything from her." She took occasion to seek Alan as soon as she could leave the piano, and said, as she grasped his hand warmly: "Thank you for trying to gratify me. I should never have asked such a favor of you if I could have foreseen how it would be received. I am sorry to have subjected you to such a painful ordeal."

"Don't think of it, Mrs. Norton," replied Alan, frankly. "It turned out just as I expected, and I am not sorry to have done what you asked me. It does not trouble *me*, I assure you."

"But it does *me*. I don't like to have girls do rude or unkind things."

After the dancing was over, the young people assembled in a group before the open door to enjoy the cool air that had followed

the heavy rain. Mrs. Norton seated herself by one of the windows and watched the group by the door, who chatted and laughed at one another's jokes as usual. She was troubled over her unsuccessful attempt to bring together the only two members of their little community who were not in harmony, and tried to settle in her mind the wisest course for her to pursue. Alan she could influence easily, for he possessed a natural courtesy for women to which she could appeal. Hattie, however, was not so easily managed, and as she recalled the haughty manner with which she refused Alan's invitation to dance, she decided that it would be unwise to approach the subject while she was in such an obdurate frame of mind.

While these thoughts were passing through the chaperon's mind, she was accosted by one of the girls.

"Mrs. Norton, only hear what an unjust accusation against our sex your brother has made! He declares that every orderly and

particularly neat woman is a shrew! Is n't it a dreadful thing to say?"

"Harry's experience is very limited as yet," replied his sister; "he is not infallible, you know."

"But, Mrs. Norton," said George Graham, "don't you think that the extra-particular housekeepers are generally rather sharp in temper? I've noticed that very amiable people, the kind who never lose their tempers, are easy in everything else."

"I agree with you that very amiable people are apt to be easily satisfied, but I can't go so far as to say that orderly people are ill-tempered and disorderly ones good-tempered."

"Well, what kind would you prefer to have for a husband or wife?"

"I should prefer one of the medium kind if I were obliged to choose," she answered laughingly.

"But suppose you were so unfortunate as to hit upon one of the extremes, which would you rather have?"

"I have thought so little on the subject, George, that I am not prepared to give an answer, but I must confess that I have very little patience with untidy people."

"So have I," he replied. "I would choose the shrew every time."

"I would n't," said Harry. "I would place a good temper first on the list. How is it with you, girls?"

The girls were very divided in their opinions, but the larger proportion sided with Harry.

"I am surprised at you, Anna," said Sue. "You are so particular yourself, I supposed you would place order and neatness before everything else."

"I have been pondering deeply over the subject for the last five minutes, and have come to this conclusion, — that it is necessary for a woman to be orderly, even if she is shrewish, for she makes the household, but that it is not so important for a man to be so, because she can compel him to

be orderly. The discipline will be salutary for him too."

"We agree, then, I see," said George, "from the different standpoints of our sexes. I think it necessary for a woman to be orderly because I consider cleanliness next to godliness. If she has a shrewish tongue, she will have to learn that she must keep it within bounds."

All this time Fritz, who had entered with a pitcher of water at the beginning of the discussion, had remained listening intently to the arguments on both sides, and at the conclusion of George's speech he evidently could restrain himself no longer, and burst forth, "If I had a wife what was scoldy, I t'ink she would soon be tired of the w'ippings which I would give her!"

A burst of laughter naturally greeted this startling sentiment, and Fritz, overcome by embarrassment, made his escape.

"Fritz seems to be of your opinion, George, although his mode of procedure differs somewhat," remarked Mrs. Norton.

“He was not born in a country where women are in the ascendancy,” replied George. “He will modify his views by the time he is ready to make a choice.”

“Let us hope others of us will do the same,” said one of the girls.

## CHAPTER SIXTEENTH



LL this time the young people had not lost their interest in their patient, Mrs. Dexter, but still took turns in caring for her. Their whole hearts were in their work, and there was not one who had not grown to love the gentle invalid and who did not realize that the example of such patience and fortitude was a privilege. It was a disappointment, however, to her young attendants to find that she did not rally beyond a certain point, and as day after day passed and she had not sufficient strength to sit up, even their hopeful natures began to see that the tendency was gradually downward.

“Every time I lift her I find her lighter,” said George Graham to Mrs. Norton, “and she is too feeble to put her arms around my

neck when I lift her up, as she used to. Poor old lady!"

"She is just as cheerful as ever," replied Anna, "but I know she is sure she is n't going to get well."

"I think Mother and I had better go and see her," said Mrs. Norton.

"Can't you go to-day?" added Anna. "She seemed so feeble this morning that Sue would not leave her. You have no idea how devoted that girl has been to her. She could n't be kinder to her own mother."

"Yes, we will go to-day," replied Mrs. Norton. "It is so long since we have seen her that we can judge of her condition better than you who see her every day. Perhaps you are over-anxious."

Sue Scudder, as Anna had said, had been devoted to the sick woman. As we have seen, her conscience often had troubled her because she had been so keenly sensitive to her mother's primitive ways and the ridicule they elicited from a few of her school friends. As she saw this gentle old woman slowly

fading away, the thought came to her mind that her mother would some day become just as old and helpless, and she put all her heart and soul into the work of caring for Mrs. Dexter. On the morning referred to, she found the invalid so much feebler than usual that she determined not to leave her.

"You are so good to me," said the sick woman, as Sue bent over her to arrange her pillows. "What a good daughter you must be!"

"No, I'm not," replied Sue, frankly; "not half as good as I want to be. My mother is the one who makes all the sacrifices, not I."

"Tisn't every girl who can appreciate a good mother when she has one."

"I have n't half appreciated mine," replied Sue, "but I think I shall more in the future. It makes you *think* to be with sick people."

"You have given me lots of comfort, if it's any consolation to know it. You've all been so good to me! I'm sure I can't see why."

“Because we take pleasure in it. You have done a thousand times more for us than we have done for you.”

“I don’t see what I’ve done for you except being a burden.”

“We are all of us better for having known you, dear Mrs. Dexter.”

“I don’t see why,” replied the sick woman, simply.

“Here are Mrs. Arnold and Mrs. Norton,” said Sue, looking out of the window as she heard a carriage stop before the house.

“How are you feeling to-day?” asked Mrs. Arnold in her pleasant voice, as she seated herself by the invalid’s bed and took the wasted hand in hers.

“I’m very comfortable. Everything has been done for me, but,” and she lowered her voice that Sue, who was in the next room, might not hear her, “I don’t expect ever to get up from this.”

“Oh, yes, indeed you will,” replied Mrs. Arnold, cheerfully. “Just think how many times you’ve been like this! This warm

weather is very debilitating, but it will soon be cooler."

"Oh, I ain't a mite afraid to go. Just think how many there is a-waiting for me on the other side!"

"But we want you here with us, you know."

"I had such a beautiful dream last night," said the sick woman. "I didn't say anything about it to the young folks, for fear they'd think I'd ought not to dwell on it."

"I would n't try to tell it now," said Mrs. Arnold, soothingly. "Wait till you feel stronger."

"T won't hurt me a mite. I dreamt that I was a-walking and walking ever so far and I'd lost my way and I was all beat out, and all at once I come to a river. I can see, just how it looked, all shining and sparkling, just as if the stars was a-shining down on it, and I could n't get across nohow, and yet I knew I'd got to cross it to get to my journey's end. And just as I was all discouraged and ready to give up, there, on the opposite shore,

I see my husband standing. He didn't look as he did when I saw him last, but he looked young and handsome, just as he did when I married him, and he was smiling and he held out his arms to me, and I ketched hold of them and he drew me right across. And just then I woke up."

"How happy it must have made you!"

"I expect to find him waiting for me on the other side," said the sick woman, "and I ain't a mite afraid to cross."

The two visitors felt that the instinct of the young people was a correct one, and that the feeble frame that held this gentle soul had done its work. That afternoon Mrs. Arnold sent a nurse to attend constantly on the sick woman, but the young people still continued their visits, and always brought comfort and sunshine with them. Day by day she grew feebler, but so placidly and peacefully was the end approaching that they could not realize that a great change was at hand.

One day she had been so restless and un-

comfortable that George, thinking a change of position would give her relief, seated himself on her bed, and gently raising her, supported her on his strong arm. The comfortable expression that came over her face showed him that the change of position gave relief, and soon the feeble head sank against his shoulder, and she fell asleep. He sat there motionless until his strong back and arm grew stiff and lame, but she slept on, and he could not be induced to change his position.

"It is not an ordinary sleep," said the nurse. "She will never wake from it."

"I don't want her to," he replied. "If she can only go without any more suffering, I will sit here all night."

So he sat thus, all his strong young muscles strained and aching, until the frail, worn-out body finished its work, and the patient, gentle soul had crossed the shining river.

Nor did the labor of love end here. The young people brought flowers, and transformed the humble dwelling into a bower of

beauty. All the stiffness and coldness that accompanies a funeral in a New England village disappeared under the loving touches of these earnest young workers, just as their happy young lives had brought warmth and sunshine into the aged woman's last hours.

"We will go with her as far as we can," George Graham had said; and he and his companions bore to its last resting-place the frail form that had contained the loving soul. So beautiful had been the life of their aged friend that they could not but feel happy in the thought that the struggle of life was over, and that she was united to those she best loved.

That evening they sat on the rocks until a late hour, watching the soft light of the moon reflected on the water, while they recalled pleasant memories of her whose last days they had cheered. For many days they missed the care they had so cheerfully bestowed, but gradually their lives settled into the old routine.

In a few days after this event, Mr. Stearns

appeared, as agreed upon. At first his presence was rather a restraint upon his pupils, and Mrs. Arnold feared that the result she had hoped for would not come about. Alan was particularly reserved in his presence, and sought every opportunity to avoid him ; but Mr. Stearns had a keen knowledge of human nature and of boys' natures, and his manner to Alan was so unembarrassed and free from restraint that Alan's reserve soon disappeared, and his manner was natural once more.

Hattie Haynes was far more affected by her teacher's presence than was Alan. Mr. Stearns, not divining the cause she had for this change of manner toward him, marvelled at her shyness and evident avoidance of him. The others, observing that their teacher threw aside the dignity that characterized his deportment toward them during school terms, dropped their reserve in return, and a genial relation was established between teacher and pupils that brought them nearer to one another than they had ever been before.

"I expected Mr. Stearns would be dreadfully schoolmastery," observed one of the girls to another, "but he is just like anyone else, I find, outside of Harbortown High School."

"It is a pleasant surprise to us all, I imagine. I heard one of the girls say before he came, 'Now our fun is over as long as he is here,' but I saw that same girl joking with him last night, just as if he were one of the boys."

"I should think teachers would feel dreadfully to have their scholars stand in such awe of them, and stop all fun as soon as they see them coming."

"I suppose they do; but it wouldn't be very dignified to have Mr. Stearns on the same terms with us during school hours as he is here in camp."

"We are discussing a picnic," explained Anna Arnold, as the girls joined the others.

"Where we went the other day? How lovely!"

"No, we want to combine a sail and picnic,

so we are thinking about Swallow Island. It is a lovely sail of about two hours."

"With a good wind," added Alan.

"Of course, with a good wind. If the wind gives out, we can drift, and be a little longer about it."

"Why is it called Swallow Island?" asked Kate.

"Because of the sparrows which are there," replied George, gravely.

"I don't see that it was so ridiculous a question as you try to make out. I thought very likely there was some legend connected with it."

"There is," replied George, in the same grave manner. "In prehistoric times, when the country was inhabited by a race of giants, one of them tried to swallow the island whole, but gave it up as a bad job. Ever since it has gone by the name of Swallow Island."

"How excruciatingly witty!" said Kate sarcastically, as a general laugh followed this explanation. "You are so bright, it is impossible to keep pace with you."

"Oh, that's nothing to what I could do if I tried."

"Pray don't try, then. We might not be able to bear your brilliancy."

"How would you like to have a chowder there?" asked Mrs. Norton. "We can take cold food, but I think something warm would taste good."

"As we are to picnic on an island, fish in some form would be appropriate," said one of the girls.

"I'll engage to make the chowder," said George.

"And we will catch our own fish," remarked Alan.

"Remembering your success on a former expedition," said Kate, "I think it would be better to be on the safe side and take our fish with us. They might not bite the hooks."

"We thought of baiting our hooks," said Alan.

"I really believe you are emulating George and Harry," said Kate. "You are the last

one I should have expected to take me to task so roundly."

"I seem to be turning out a surprise to my friends generally," replied Alan, with such a touch of bitterness in his tone that all present knew to what he referred.

"It does not seem to have the effect of lessening their esteem for you," said Anna, always ready to defend her friends.

"Will you help me down from this rock?" asked Kate, extending her hand toward Alan, who stood just below.

"Allow me!" said George, stepping in front of him and reaching his hand to her.

"Thank you, I spoke to Alan," replied Kate, with some asperity. "I might make a slip, you know."

"Alan," said George, with assumed dignity and severity, as Kate, with the aid of Alan's hand, sprang lightly down from the rock, "this young lady has openly slighted me in preference to you. We will settle this in the manner customary to men of honor."

"I am at your service," replied Alan, equally dignified.

"What nonsensical boys!" exclaimed Kate, much pleased to have created such a sensation.

"Only blood will wipe out such an insult," replied George. "What weapons will you choose, Alan? Cannon-crackers or torpedoes?"

"My second will communicate with you," replied Alan.

"There is the dinner-call," said Anna, "so you will have to curb your bloodthirsty spirits for a while."

That evening after sundown, little Fritz announced to Anna with much consternation that the puppy Stilts was missing. "I give him his supper and he did eat it, and then he was gone already. I know not what will become out of him," he said, almost weeping.

"Don't feel so bad about it," said Anna, kindly; "he can't be lost in this place. Every one in the village knows him. He

will come back as soon as he is hungry, you may be sure."

Fritz, however, refused to be comforted. "He is so young already yet," he answered sadly, "he knows not how to care for himself."

"I think he has shown himself able to take care of himself remarkably well," said Anna. "He always gets the best of everything."

Fritz, however, was not consoled. "There is one place where the blueberries do grow," he said, suddenly brightening. "I t'ink he perhaps go there. It is there a hole where lives one bootjack."

"Lives what?" asked Anna, in surprise.

"One bootjack," replied Fritz, earnestly. "Know you not what a bootjack is? He have long brown hairs, and have no tail."

"Oh, you mean a woodchuck!" exclaimed Anna, laughing. "I should n't wonder if he had gone there."

"I shall seek him," replied Fritz, at once setting off in the direction of the blueberry pasture, where the berrying-party had been

a short time before. He remembered the woodchuck's hole that Goggles had sniffed out on that occasion, and recalled the excitement the puppy had manifested in the matter. He had started off in that direction several times since, but was captured before he had gone far on his expedition.

Fritz, with a much lighter heart, now that he felt satisfied he should find his beloved charge, bounded along the path that led to the blueberry pasture, occasionally whistling the call that usually brought the puppy to his side if he were within hearing distance. This time, however, the puppy did not appear, and Fritz reached the blueberry pasture without finding a trace of him.

Fritz redoubled his whistling and called the puppy by name, but still there was no trace of him. He found the woodchuck's hole, but no puppy was there, and poor Fritz was ready to cry with disappointment, for his feelings were very tender and the puppy was very dear to him. At last he bethought himself of the spot where the

berrying-party had held their picnic,—that beautiful grove overlooking the sea. Perhaps the puppy had gone there, hoping to come upon the remains of that delicious ham-bone which had been taken away from him that day. Fritz soon reached the grove, but when he came in sight of it he stood still with amazement, almost petrified at the spectacle before him. There sat Goggles, and by his side was the lost puppy, both apparently engrossed in the sight that had so startled Fritz.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH



N the beautiful grove where so short a time before Fritz had seen the picnic table spread, stood a group that evidently had not met in that beautiful spot for purposes of pleasure. Alan Leigh and George Graham stood opposite each other, pistols in hand, while a companion stood behind each. Fritz, concealed behind a clump of young trees, watched the group with eyes extended to their utmost capacity, too terrified to move or speak. He had heard of men trying to kill one another, and a horrible curiosity to see what was going on rooted him to the spot.

“Harry,” said George Graham to his friend who stood behind him, after a pause in which Fritz could hear his heart thumping wildly against his side, “I have a request to make

of you. In case I fall, will you take this letter to my mother, in which all is explained, and tell her that her name was the last on my lips?" As he spoke, he solemnly handed a note to him.

"You may rely on me, my friend," replied Harry, in the same serious vein; "she shall know all."

"Ned," said Alan to his companion in his turn, "if I do not have the pleasure of killing this gentleman, tell her in whose cause I fall that I felt proud to die in such a noble cause. And tell my father that I died game."

"I will, Alan," replied his friend, as he wiped his eyes with his handkerchief; "you may depend on me."

If Fritz had had any doubts that a tragedy was about to be enacted before him, these words would have served to dispel them. One thing was certain, that George Graham meant to shoot Alan Leigh and Alan Leigh meant to shoot George Graham, perhaps each would shoot the other. Fritz was a tender-

hearted and conscientious boy, and realizing that not a moment was to be lost, he determined to prevent this calamity, and set off for home at full speed, in order to find somebody who had sufficient authority to stop the proceedings. He had run fast when he was seeking the puppy, but now, in this case of life or death, he fairly flew over the ground. That by the time he reached the camp it would be too late never occurred to the boy in his desperation.

As it happened, Mr. Norton, who was at that time at the camp, proposed that evening that his wife and Mr. Stearns should walk to the west side of the Point to see the sunset, which happened to be an unusually fine one. When just opposite the blueberry pasture, they encountered Fritz, rushing so blindly along that he actually ran against them before he recognized them.

“What in the world has happened to you, Fritz?” asked Mr. Norton, astonished at the boy’s terrified expression. “Is the bull after you?”

"Go so quick how you can," gasped the boy, with his breath nearly gone. "I am afraid about those young gentlemens. They have kill each oder perhaps already."

"What *do* you mean?" asked Mr. Norton, bewildered. "Talk so I can understand you. What young gentlemen do you mean? Where are they?"

"Mr. George and Mr. Alan," replied Fritz. "They shoot at each oder with guns. They are there over, where we by the picnic have eaten;" and he extended a shaking arm in the direction of the grove and the western shore.

"I know where he means," said Mrs. Norton, "but there cannot be any cause for alarm. It is only some nonsense of those boys."

"Probably they have been amusing themselves with a mock duel," said Mr. Norton.

"I think we ought to look into the matter," said Mr. Stearns. "Boys' spirits carry them pretty far sometimes, and accidents do often happen. The boy says they have guns."

“Oh, hurry yourselves!” cried Fritz, wringing his hands in his desperation. “I have hear them say they wish to kill each odder.”

“Very well, we will go,” replied Mr. Norton; and he and the teacher hurried in the direction of the grove, followed closely by Mrs. Norton and the excited Fritz.

“Mr. George he have ask Mr. Harry to give a letter to his modder. They looked how they would weep,” said Fritz.

“I supposed Harry was in it,” said Mrs. Norton. “I know it is all nonsense, but, as Mr. Stearns says, accidents do sometimes happen. You know how reckless George and Harry are.”

“I shall not believe anything has happened until I have proof of it,” replied her husband.

It took but a short time to reach the grove, and they came upon the combatants without their presence being noticed. As they appeared, they heard the words, “One, two, three, fire!” A report instantly followed, and they beheld George Graham reel and fall heavily to the ground. In an instant his





second, Harry, was bending over him endeavoring to loosen his collar.

"Tell Alan to flee the country. A skiff awaits him on the shore," murmured George, with closed eyes.

"What is all this?" exclaimed Mr. Norton, as the three reached the spot.

George immediately opened his eyes and rose to a sitting posture, looking decidedly shamefaced as he caught sight of his three visitors. "It means that Alan shot me, but I doubt if the wound is fatal," he replied, rising to his feet.

"You see how groundless your fears were, Fritz. Here are the guns you told us about;" and Mr. Norton took up the toy pistol that lay on the ground by the fallen hero's side.

"I don't wonder the boy was alarmed," said Mr. Stearns. "I must say I was myself when I saw George fall."

"I hope your sense of honor is satisfied, Alan," said Mrs. Norton.

"Perfectly," he replied, quite seriously, as he offered his hand to his recent antagonist.

"Then we can go home together," returned Mrs. Norton. "You have been the means of our losing the sunset view for which we came, but 'all's well that ends well.'"

As they walked back to camp, Fritz and the puppy racing ahead of the party, it happened that Mrs. Norton and Mr. Stearns were left some distance behind the others.

"It is astonishing to what childish things young people will resort for amusement," the teacher remarked.

"They are only half-grown children as yet," she answered. "I can understand how George and Harry can resort to childish pastimes, but Alan is so dignified and takes life so seriously, it is a constant surprise to me when he acts like the other boys."

"He has been a surprise to me, I can assure you. I am greatly disappointed in him."

"You refer, of course, to the time he was expelled from school; but did n't it occur to you, Mr. Stearns, that he was not the guilty one?"

"Why, I saw the note lying at his feet, just as it slipped out of his hand."

"But didn't you suspect that some one else might have written it?"

"Why did he not say so, then? He didn't attempt to deny it when I confronted him with the fact."

"Alan isn't the kind to vindicate himself at the expense of another. He has an innate sense of courtesy, and I am convinced that he would be willing to suffer for the fault of any girl who had not the courage to confess her guilt."

"I must confess that I had not thought of the subject in that light. I was disappointed that Alan, who had always been so frank and honest, should so deliberately disobey me. But why does not he explain matters? He need not necessarily implicate the real offender."

"Alan is reserved and strong-willed. The social life here among companions of his own age has done him a world of good. You must have noticed how much more genial

his manner has grown. I am convinced, however, that nothing would induce him to seek to exonerate himself. He has too much pride for that."

"It seems to me that his courtesy has caused him to carry matters altogether too far. I must say that I feel vexed with him for being so obstinate, when a word would set matters straight. He owes it to his self-respect not to allow his character to be maligned."

"I don't wonder that you are vexed with him. I am, too, but I feel very kindly toward him when I think of the lonely life he has led since his mother's death. A mother would have straightened out this affair without implicating anybody."

"I presume you are right, but what can I do about it?"

"Oh, Mr. Stearns, you can find out the truth of the matter, as I have, if you only use your eyes. Watch the young people when they are together, and see if among all the fresh young faces there is one less frank and joyous than the others,— who looks as if

there were something on her mind that weighs down her spirits and prevents her from giving herself just as she is to her companions. I have seen such a girl here, and I pity her with all my heart and soul. Think what a burden that poor child must carry around with her, which she longs to drop, and yet cannot find the courage!"

"I doubt if my masculine eyes are able to discover the one you describe so feelingly, but I will do my best. If I should discover her, what then? What good would it do? Do you expect me to confront her with the falsehood she is living?"

"Certainly not; but you could lead up to the subject in a way she would not suspect, whenever an opportunity offers. With a little tact you could refer in a general way to the unhappy state of mind of those who carry in their breasts a secret they want to divulge. I am sure that girl would seize the opportunity to divulge her secret. *Do* try, Mr. Stearns. It is not really so much for Alan's sake that I wish it, for he is honest

and honorable, and has done nothing to be ashamed of. It is the girl I am thinking most of, for I feel sure this will be the turning-point in her life. If she confesses this fault her companions are generous enough to forgive and forget, and the suffering she has undergone will keep her from ever doing the thing again."

"I will try my best; but did you ever happen to know a man who had tact enough to engineer an affair like this?"

"The tact I mean comes from a good heart, Mr. Stearns, and if I were not sure you possessed that, I should not have appealed to you."

"I hope I shall not disappoint you, but I am not so sanguine as you seem to be."

When they reached the camp, they found the young people assembled in the grove, talking over the plans for the proposed picnic. It was decided that they should take advantage of the first propitious day that Captain Higgins' boat should be disengaged. As Mrs. Norton crossed the grove on the way to her

mother's house, she found Sue Scudder seated apart from the chattering group, her head resting wearily against the tree that served as a support.

"Why, Sue!" she exclaimed, "why are you here alone? Do you not feel well, dear?"

"It is only a headache," replied Sue. "I think I was too long on the rocks in the hot sun. It is so cool and quiet here, I feel better already."

"It is the best thing you can do, dear. I noticed at the tea-table that you did not look quite so well as usual."

Mrs. Norton remained some time with her mother, and it was quite dark when she returned to the camp. As she approached it, she beheld Mr. Stearns coming to meet her.

"Well," he said, as he turned to walk back with her, "I have been making the best use of my eyes I know, and I have discovered the girl I was seeking."

"Have you?" exclaimed Mrs. Norton, joyfully, "and what success did you have? Did she confide in you?"

“I presume I have spoiled matters in some unfortunate way, for, although I approached the subject as delicately as I could, and I flatter myself quite tactfully for a man, I met with a rebuff. You are entirely mistaken in the condition of that young girl’s mind, my friend. She has no idea of confiding her fault to any one, nor does she desire to make atonement.”

“You surprise me! Why, I thought she would be grateful for the chance!”

“Not she! A most obdurate girl, Mrs. Norton. I am more vexed than I can say that a noble fellow like Alan should have made such a mistaken sacrifice for one with such a hardened conscience.”

“Well, all I can say is that I am astounded,” exclaimed Mrs. Norton. “What did she say? She was not rude, I hope.”

“She remarked in the most indifferent manner that as she never had committed any deed that she was obliged to conceal, she could not judge of the feelings of those who had.”

"How could she say that? I am dreadfully disappointed in her."

"So am I. Hush! here she comes. I should not like to have her think I was repeating our conversation to you."

"My head is much better, thank you," replied Sue, in answer to Mrs. Norton's inquiry. "I shall sleep off the rest, I am sure."

"Do you believe that a girl who carries her head so high as she does would be likely to say she was sorry for a fault she had concealed for so long?" asked Mr. Stearns, when they were out of hearing.

Mrs. Norton stopped short and looked intently at her companion. "Is it possible that you thought Sue Scudder was the girl?"

"Why, of course. Didn't you?"

"Sue Scudder is not afraid of anybody or anything. Why, there isn't a girl in Harbortown with more moral courage than she has! How could you think she was the one?"

"I noticed that she sat apart from the

others and looked dejected, so I concluded she was the one I was seeking. I told you I could n't do it!"

"We shall have to be patient and wait for the mystery to be unravelled in some other way. The idea of your hitting upon Sue Scudder of all others! Why, it never occurred to me that you would get the wrong girl!" And the chaperon broke into a laugh, in which her companion joined.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH



FEW mornings later, Captain Higgins appeared, long before the breakfast hour, to propose that they should make their expedition to Swallow Island on that day, as the wind was favorable and his large sloop disengaged. The news quickly spread through the camp, and all appeared promptly at the breakfast-table in the high spirits which the anticipation of a sail always calls out in the young. Breakfast was hurriedly eaten, not one of the party even waiting for a second help of their favorite griddle-cakes that Fritz brought in steaming from the cook-house.

“Is Goggles included in the invitation?” asked George, as Mrs. Norton was hurrying to the cook-house to consult the cook about the provisions to be taken, while Goggles

looked with anxious eyes from one to the other, to learn his fate.

“Certainly, Goggles is to go. Why, he is one of us, you know! Fancy what a forlorn day he would have with us gone! I draw the line at the puppy, though.”

Goggles at once smoothed as many of the wrinkles out of his forehead as he could, and looked as happy as the naturally pensive expression of a bulldog is capable of looking. Then he seated himself as close to his master as possible with his back to him, after the manner of bulldogs. The puppy, who imitated the bulldog’s ways, had adopted this habit, but it was not so effective in one of his make.

“I don’t see why the puppy could n’t go, with Fritz to look after him,” said Anna, who always wanted everybody to have a good time.

“No,” replied Mrs. Norton, decidedly, “a boy and puppy would be too much responsibility altogether. One of them would be sure to fall overboard. They will have a

good time here, with the whole camp to roam over and make as much noise in as they please."

"May I see you a minute, Mrs. Norton?" asked Sue Scudder, as the chaperon was hurrying off in the direction of her mother's house.

"Of course you can see me, Sue. Take a good look at me, but be as quick as possible, for I haven't any time to waste."

"I should have said 'May I *speak* to you a minute?'" replied Sue. "There is something I want to tell you."

"Certainly, dear, but walk along with me to my mother's, it will save time. Now, what is it?" and Mrs. Norton drew Sue's arm through hers and continued on her way.

"I happened down to the beach just now," began Sue, in a low tone, "to look for a handkerchief I left there last night, and I came upon Hattie Haynes sitting down behind a big rock and crying dreadfully. She wouldn't tell me what the matter was, but when I told her it was time to get ready

for the sailing-party, she said she wasn't going."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Norton, "of course she must go. Could n't you persuade her?"

"Not in the least. She said she should n't go, and I need n't waste my time in trying to persuade her, and I saw it was of no use. So I left her and thought you might perhaps make her change her mind. It seems a pity to go off and leave the poor thing all alone!"

"It will not do at all. She *must* go. If you will go to my mother's and do my errand for me, I will see what I can do with Hattie. Please tell mother to take with her all the olives she has in the house and two dozen hard-boiled eggs, if she has them."

"I will, with pleasure," replied Sue, as she started in the direction of Mrs. Arnold's house.

"The paths of a chaperon are not all strewn with roses," said Mrs. Norton to herself, as she hurried in the direction of the

beach. "If I can only make some impression on this headstrong girl, I shall be thankful. This unfortunate affair stands just where it did when I was blind enough to think I could manage it, only Hattie grows more obstinate as time goes on."

These depressing reflections filled the mind of the chaperon as she hastened on her way. It was not so easy to find the big rock of which Sue had spoken, for there were many big rocks on that part of the beach, and the chaperon looked on all sides of several huge boulders before she came upon the girl she sought. At last she found her, huddled in a secluded corner, indulging in a violent fit of grief.

"Why, Hattie dear," said the chaperon kindly, sitting down by the weeping girl's side and putting an arm about her, "I have been hunting for you, for it is almost time to start, and here you are crying. What can be the matter?"

"You need n't wait for me, Mrs. Norton," replied Hattie, as well as she could for the

catches in her voice, "for I am not going with you."

"Not going!" exclaimed the chaperon. "Why, of course you are going! What put such an idea into your mind?"

"I can't stand this kind of life any longer!" said Hattie, passionately. "It grows worse and worse! It is bad enough here, to be avoided by all the others, but to be crowded together in a boat and be with them all day long, as I should have to be on a picnic, is more than I can stand. It is of no use to ask me, Mrs. Norton, I shall not go! I am determined on that!"

"Well, if you are determined, Hattie, I am determined too! I shall not go on that sailing-party and leave you here in camp alone. If you stay, I stay."

"I don't see why my staying at home would make any difference to you. I can take care of myself. Besides, you are so particular, I should think you wouldn't consider it proper for the boys and girls to go without a chaperon."

"My mother and Mr. Norton can take care of the sailing-party, Hattie, and I certainly shall not leave you here alone in such a state of mind as you are in. Our time is short, and you must decide quickly. Will you go or stay?"

"I suppose I shall have to go," replied Hattie, reluctantly, "for I don't want to spoil your day. I am ashamed to have the others see my red eyes. They will know I have been crying."

"They are too much engrossed in thoughts about the picnic to look at your eyes. Besides, your eyes will be all right by the time we are ready to start. Sit in the shade for a few minutes and let the air blow over your face and it will soon be cool. There, here is a nice place to sit, and in a few minutes go to your room and get ready to start. I must hurry." She left Hattie sitting there in the cooling breeze and hastened away.

"I have tried persuasion, and that doesn't work," said the chaperon to herself, as she hurried along. "I see the girl lacks resolu-

tion, and I must supply it for her. I am determined that to-day shall settle this unhappy affair. Yes, I must exert all the will-power I possess."

The arrangements were soon completed, and the party proceeded to the little pier where lay the sloop, rising and falling on the tide, her loose sail flapping gently in the light breeze.

"Does n't she look just like a live creature,—some kind of a huge bird that is impatient to start?" said Kate Lawson enthusiastically, as they came in sight of the graceful boat.

"I don't know a prettier sight than a boat under sail," said Alan. "They do look and seem like live creatures."

"I wish I knew the names of all the ropes and things," said Kate. "I don't know a single one of them."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed George. "Well, your education has been dreadfully neglected."

"I *should* like to know what people are talking about when they use nautical terms."

"Of course you ought to. Why, your life might depend on it sometime. As soon as we are off I will explain a few of the simplest and most popular terms."

"I should n't trust you. You would take delight in telling me wrong and then ridiculing me if I repeated them."

"Well, then, ask Alan. He never misleads any one. He knows more about it, too, than I do."

"I should certainly trust him sooner than I would you or Harry."

Mrs. Arnold was one of the party, and was assisted to a seat out of the reach of the boom when they should "go about." Mrs. Norton and the girls were bestowed in safe positions, the baskets stowed away in the little cabin, Goggles in the bow, where he could keep a good lookout in case any craft with a dog on board should heave in sight, Mr. Stearns, Mr. Norton, and the boys scattered about the deck, and they were off.

Fritz and the puppy from the pier watched them depart, the puppy barking himself

hoarse in order to attract the attention of Goggles, who pretended not to see him. The last the party saw of the two, they were racing back to the camp, the puppy, with his teeth fastened in the boy's knickerbockers, getting over the ground with very little effort on his part.

"At this rate," said Mr. Norton, "it will hardly take us two hours to reach the island. There is no danger of this breeze giving out."

"Dear me!" said one of the girls, "I wish we did n't have to keep ducking our heads every time this horrid pole goes over to the other side. I forget what they call it."

"The boom," replied Harry.

"Is it really?" she asked, turning to Captain Higgins.

"I never heerd it called by any other name," he answered, in the true Yankee habit of avoiding a direct "yes" or "no" in replying to a question.

"What would the captain tell the sailors to do if he wanted to go faster?" asked Kate.

"You answer her, Alan; she would n't believe any of the rest of us," said George.

"What order would the captain give, you mean?" asked Alan. "He would probably say, 'Haul aft the weather bow-line,' or else, 'Let go the cross-braces.' It depends upon circumstances."

"And suppose he wanted to go slower, what would he say then?"

"Then he would be likely to give the order, 'Clew in the main halyards,' or 'Haul home the booby-hatch.' In an extreme case he might order them to take a reef in the mainmast."

"I don't believe a word of it," said Kate. "I know you have told me all wrong, because George and Harry look so amused. Besides, Mr. Norton and even Mr. Stearns are trying not to laugh, I can see."

"Ask Captain if you don't believe me."

"Did n't he tell me all wrong, Captain Higgins?"

"Well, I don't know as I ever heerd jest sech orders given, but then I hain't been around the world but a few times."

"There! I told you so, boys!" exclaimed Kate. "If there were any such expressions, it is likely Captain Higgins would have known them."

"He's only guying you," said George. "Captain, do you mean to say that you never heard of taking a reef in the mainmast?"

"I can't say that I ever see it done, but I dare say there's a good many things I have n't seen."

"As I am not fond of making a spectacle of myself, I don't think I shall make use of any of the nautical terms you've taught me," said Kate. "I prefer to continue in ignorance."

"I should think you would like to acquire a little general knowledge," said Harry, "particularly as you live in a seaboard town."

"I said I wanted to, but I don't care to learn wrong terms."

"I should think you might trust Alan; he has spent all his leisure hours among vessels and sailors. It would be strange if he didn't know something about them."

"Oh, I don't doubt his knowledge in the least, but he has been so much with you and George lately that he has acquired some of your ways. Habits are contagious, you know."

While this conversation was going on, other groups were chattering and laughing together, all stimulated to merriment by the bracing sea-breezes and the motion of the boat through the water. One alone sat apart and did not join in the merriment about her.

"If Mr. Stearns does not discover to-day the one he is looking for, he must be blind," said the chaperon to herself, as she looked at the only sad face among the happy group about her. "He does see it, too," she added, as she glanced in the direction of the teacher's eyes, and found them resting intently on Hattie's face. In a few minutes he had left his seat beside Mr. Norton, and approached the chaperon.

"Have I hit on the right girl this time?" he asked in a low tone. "Poor child, she looks as if she had been crying her eyes out!"

"She has. This is not going on any

longer. Before we leave the island that girl must confess to you and apologize to Alan. She will work herself into a fever if this tension is kept up much longer."

"You are right. Do persuade her to do so. It is pitiable to see her sad face among all those joyous ones."

The island was now reached, and when within a few rods of it, down rattled the sail, and the sloop was anchored. Then the tender was drawn alongside, and the party rowed ashore. Several trips between the sloop and the island were made before the whole party was landed, the boys taking turns in rowing. Then the provisions were brought over, and Captain Higgins was left on board to look after his boat until he should be called to dinner.

There was no doubt as to what gave the island its name. Swallows were darting about in swift circles and twittering anxiously together, as if discussing indignantly the invasion of their territory.

"Over on the other side of the island, in

those sand banks, the swallows live," said Harry. "The sand is just riddled with the holes they have made."

"What do they make holes for?" asked one of the girls.

"I wanted to know that," said Kate, "but I did n't dare to ask."

"Why, for nests. Didn't you know that bank swallows dig holes in sand banks for nests?" asked Harry.

"No, I thought they built nests in chimneys and barns."

"Some do, but not bank swallows."

The sand banks were at once visited by a party who were curious to see how bank swallows managed their family affairs. They were accompanied by a swarm of anxious parent-birds who circled about their heads, angrily and noisily protesting against this intrusion. When within a reasonable distance, they stopped and watched the swallow colony. The high sand hills were full of round holes, in and out of which birds were rapidly darting in their excitement.

"We ought not to stay here any longer," said Anna. "The poor birds are almost distracted for fear we shall disturb their nests. They will quiet down when they find we didn't come here after them."

"Do you see that little column of smoke rising over there?" asked Harry, looking back in the direction of that part of the island where they had landed. "That is George building his fire to cook the chowder."

"The very thought of it makes me hungry," said one of the girls. "Suppose we go and watch him."

They found George had started his chowder, and the pork in the bottom of the kettle was sending forth clouds of appetizing steam. As the party came up, he was engaged in slicing potatoes, while the fish, already prepared to be used when wanted, was placed in a dish near by.

"It is lucky we had the forethought to bring our fish," said one of the girls. "We should have been pretty hungry before they were caught."

"Suppose you girls set the table and unpack the baskets," said George. "By the time you are ready my chowder will be."

A cool and comfortable spot was selected, a cloth spread, and the pleasing occupation of unpacking the viands began. This was done by the boys, but the arrangement of the table was left to the girls.

All this time Mrs. Norton had been revolving in her mind the responsible task she had decided to take upon herself. As soon as she saw the preparations for dinner beginning, she determined that the unpleasant duty before her should be done before they all sat down together, and that it should prove to be a feast of reconciliation. She seized the moment when all were too much occupied to see what was going on, and drew Hattie away from the others to a spot where they could talk undisturbed.

"I have been thinking over this unhappy state of affairs, Hattie dear," she said, seating herself on a grassy knoll and drawing the girl to a seat beside her. "I have under-

taken the care of you all, and for the time take the place of your mothers. You are too young and inexperienced to decide a matter like this, and I feel it my duty to do it for you."

"I have already decided what to do, Mrs. Norton. I intend to go home to-morrow."

"And what reason do you intend to give to your parents for leaving us in this sudden manner?"

"It is easy enough to give a plausible reason for leaving. I can say I was not well or was homesick."

"No, Hattie, that will never do. If you go, tell the plain, straightforward truth, and put an end to the life of duplicity you have led all summer."

"You use hard words, Mrs. Norton."

"None too hard for the case. Come, Hattie, pull yourself together and do the right thing. You can end this misery you have been undergoing ever since you came, by speaking a few words. You will never have another such opportunity. Tell Mr. Stearns

the truth, and then tell Alan what you have done. After that you will go back to the old relations with your companions."

"I might tell Mr. Stearns, but I will not humble myself again to Alan, to be snubbed a second time!"

"There is some mistake, I know. Do you think a boy who did for you what Alan did, would refuse to accept your apology? Does it never occur to you, Hattie, what your silence is doing for that boy? Do you understand that through your fault he has lost all his chances in life? That his father has refused to spend any money on his education and that he has made up his mind to go to sea? What will people think of you — what can you think of yourself, if you allow all this to go on? Have you really as little heart as your conduct shows you to have?"

For a moment Hattie was silent, and her friend saw that a tumult of feeling was going on within her breast. Putting an arm around her, she continued, —

"I know your heart is all right, dear,

but your poor brain has become dazed in trying to untangle this muddled state of affairs, and leads you astray. Listen to your better nature, Hattie dear. Do what you feel to be right and kind, and everything will come out right in the end. Just think, you can end this misery in a few minutes and go back to camp as light-hearted as any of them, — your own self."

"I will, Mrs. Norton!" exclaimed Hattie, resolutely. "I cannot bear this life any longer! I will end it this minute!"

"That is the right spirit, dear. Now that you have decided, the worst is over. I will send Mr. Stearns here at once;" and away went the chaperon with a light heart, determined to take instant advantage of Hattie's resolute mood.

## CHAPTER NINETEENTH



O engrossed were the young people in their preparations for dinner, that they did not observe Mrs. Norton speak a few words to their teacher, after which they both went away together.

“She has summoned up sufficient courage to confess the whole,” said Mrs. Norton, as they walked toward the spot where she had left Hattie. “After she has spoken to you, she will explain to Alan. A load will be taken off my mind when the affair is safely wound up, although Hattie has gone too far to turn back.”

“You will not be more relieved than I shall be. I can assure you this affair has troubled me greatly. I have regretted more than I can say that I made the penalty such a harsh one, but for the sake of school

discipline I felt I ought not to go back on my word."

"I can understand. You thought the threat sufficient to keep them from disobeying, but boys and girls are reckless, particularly just before vacation."

"For the sake of human nature, I must say I believe there is not another pupil in the whole school who would have done this thing. That is why I felt particularly disappointed that Alan should be the one."

Hattie received them with downcast eyes and great trepidation of manner. She made several attempts to begin, but the words would not come, and Mrs. Norton, pitying her confusion, came to her assistance.

"Hattie wishes to say to you, Mr. Stearns," she said, "that she has been trying to gain courage to tell you that she was the one who wrote the note, and not Alan."

"Yes," continued Hattie, finding voice now that the ice was broken, "I am the one, and I was too much of a coward to confess it, and as time went on it became harder

than ever. I don't know what possessed me to break the rules, but I did, and I, not Alan, am the one to be expelled."

"The affair has given me a great deal of unhappiness," replied Mr. Stearns, gravely, "for I never before was obliged to expel a pupil from my school; but as it is, it is only justice for you to reinstate Alan and take the consequences of your own folly."

"I shall feel happier to have it so than I have been to carry such a dreadful secret about with me."

"I am sure of it. I am glad, however, that you righted Alan before school opens again. Better late than never, you know."

"Now that the first step is taken," said Mrs. Norton, "the rest will not be so difficult. I will send Alan to you, and you can make it right with him. He will not make it hard for you, I am sure."

When Mrs. Norton arrived at the spot where she had left the party, she found Alan just returned from a trip to the sloop in order to bring the captain to dinner.

"I have something to say to you," she said in a low tone. "Captain Higgins, if you will join the others, we will soon be back."

"Alan," said Mrs. Norton, as she put her arm through his and started in the direction of the place where she had left Hattie, "Hattie has confessed all to Mr. Stearns, and wants to make an apology to you for the trouble she has caused. She is waiting over there to see you."

Alan came to a sudden stop, and looked at the chaperon in a surprise too great for words.

"I don't wonder you are surprised after her long silence. She has been most miserable all this time, I assure you, and has wanted to confess, but could n't find the courage."

"I could never understand why she did n't do it at once. It would have been easier than it is now. I don't want her to apologize to me. I would rather she would n't."

"She will not feel right until she does.

She tried to once, but you evidently did not understand what she meant, and she thought you repulsed her."

"When was that? I don't remember any such time."

"It was a short time ago. She said you were in the dining-hall, and as soon as she began you answered her very haughtily and left her abruptly."

"Oh, I remember now. I didn't know she was going to apologize. I thought she was only trying to smooth it over, and it made me mad."

"Well, now you know what is coming, you will be prepared for it."

"Tell her not to, Mrs. Norton. I can't stand a scene. I would rather let things go on as they are than have a fuss about it."

"You must make up your mind to go through with it, Alan. You must on her account, you know."

"Do you suppose she will cry? I can't stand it when girls begin to cry. I never know what to say to them."

"There will be very little for you to say. Poor Hattie will have to do all the talking."

"See here, Mrs. Norton," said Alan, really distressed, "could n't you just say to her that you told me all about it and I said it was all right?"

Mrs. Norton broke into a laugh in spite of herself. "Really, Alan, you are the last person I should have suspected of being a coward. It seems ludicrous to me to see you trying to back out of this simple interview, when you have shown yourself so brave all through the affair."

"I don't mind if she won't cry."

"I can safely promise you that she will not cry," said Mrs. Norton. "She did not shed a tear when she made her confession to Mr. Stearns, and I am sure her pride will sustain her through her interview with you."

"Well, I suppose there is nothing to be done but to go through with it," replied Alan, squaring his broad shoulders for the coming interview, and drawing a long breath.

"Nothing else," replied Mrs. Norton, firmly. "Come, we must have it through with before dinner. Shall I leave you alone with Hattie, or would you rather I should stay?"

"Oh, stay, for Heaven's sake!" exclaimed Alan in alarm, as he drew closely to his side the hand she was about to withdraw from his arm.

"Really," said Mrs. Norton, laughing at the consternation in the boy's face that was usually so strong and self-reliant, "one would think you were the guilty one, and not the one who is about to receive an apology."

"I believe I had rather be the guilty one."

"No, you would n't. But here we are; so pull yourself together, and it will soon be over."

"Between the two," said the chaperon to herself, "I think I shall be the one to require bracing, for I doubt if either of the two has a word to say."

Hattie was seated when they appeared, and as soon as she saw them approaching, she rose and stood with her hands tightly clasped to-

gether, and her eyes cast on the ground. She was not crying, as Alan saw at the first glance, and with a sense of intense relief, but not a word did she speak as he stood before her with his bright, dark eyes scanning her downcast face. What he saw there appealed to the chivalrous part of his nature, for her expression was sad and timid, and at sight of it his stronger nature asserted itself, and all the signs of the timidity he had betrayed a few moments before vanished. As he stood waiting for her to begin, the chaperon glanced at his face, and seeing there the compassion and sense of protection that a strong nature feels for a weak and suffering one, she knew that the nobility of his nature had asserted itself, and that she could trust him to do the right thing. So she left the two together, and went back to the gay party preparing dinner, to acquaint them with the change of affairs.

After her kind friend had left, Hattie, feeling that she had now no one to fall back upon, made a great effort at self-control, and

at last found voice. "I am very sorry," she said, in so low a tone that she could hardly be heard, while she nervously twisted her fingers in and out, from the effort it cost her to speak, "for all the trouble I have caused you. I didn't mean—I mean I didn't realize what I was doing. I have told all to Mr. Stearns, so now you can go back to school, but I don't expect you ever to forgive me, for I don't deserve it."

"Don't say any more about it," said Alan, in such a kindly tone that Hattie raised her eyes to his, and met there not the hard, cold expression she had expected to find, but a kind and compassionate one. "I am sure you have suffered more than I have. Boys don't feel these things as much as girls do."

"Yes, they do," replied Hattie warmly, with a return of her natural manner; "only they bear it better. I knew you were miserable, but I hadn't the courage to right matters. Even if you forgive me, you will never forget what has happened, and you must despise me in your heart."

“I am not that kind of a fellow,” replied Alan. “I didn’t behave very graciously to you, I know, but I assure you I shall not treasure any bad feelings toward you. Here is my hand on it;” and he took Hattie’s cold little hand in his strong firm one, and gave it a warm grasp of friendship.

“Now let the subject be forever dropped between us,” he said cheerfully. “I shall dismiss it from my mind from this moment, and you must do the same.”

“That will not be so easy for me as it will for you. Your conscience is clear, and mine is n’t.”

“But you are all right now. Come, let us go to dinner,” he hastened to add, as he saw the look in Hattie’s eyes that seemed to him a prelude to the fit of weeping that he so much dreaded. “I, for one, am dreadfully hungry.”

“You go,” replied Hattie, now with decided tears standing in her eyes, the sight of which put Alan in a panic of fear, “but I can’t face the others yet.”

"You must come," replied Alan, firmly; "I know what you want to stay here alone for. You want to have a good cry all by yourself, and you will make yourself ill. Come, there's nothing to cry for now. All you've got to do is to be happy, and be glad it's turned out right."

"I am happy," replied Hattie, the tears that had gathered in her eyes now running over her cheeks. "This is the happiest day I have had all summer."

"Then what in the world are you crying for?" asked Alan. "I never *could* understand why girls cry when they are sad and when they are happy too."

"I suppose it is because the strain I have been under all summer is over," replied Hattie. "I never would have believed I could feel happy to think I was expelled from the High School."

"I forgot all about that side of the subject," said Alan, seriously. "It is pretty hard lines for you."

"No harder for me than for you, and no

more than I deserve. Nothing will seem hard to me now that my conscience is at rest."

"Then wipe your eyes and come to dinner with me," replied practical Alan.

"Oh, I can't! I could n't bear the mortification of meeting the others."

"You've got to meet them sometime, so why not face the music at once? The longer you put it off the harder it will be."

"I know it, but I must have a few minutes to myself first. You go on and I will follow shortly."

"Really and truly? Well, I'll go. Remember the longer you cry the redder your eyes will be."

"It is strange," said Alan to himself, as he proceeded toward the place where his companions were preparing dinner, "what pleasure girls seem to take in crying! If they knew how it hurts their looks, perhaps they would n't do it so often. Now Hattie is a pretty girl when she is cheerful, but as soon as she begins to cry her face gets kind of spotted and swollen. They seem to

take a lot of comfort in it, somehow. It makes it pretty uncomfortable for a fellow, though. You never know what to do about it."

The chaperon had in a few words announced the step Hattie had taken, and silence followed her disclosure for a moment, so great was the surprise of all. In an instant, however, the girls gave expression to their minds as freely as is the custom of their sex. "I should think it was about time," said one. "Well, I am surprised, I had no idea she would give in," said another. The boys kept their opinions to themselves, but it was evident that they were as much taken by surprise as the girls were.

"Now I want to remind you," said Mrs. Norton, earnestly, "that this has been a very hard step for Hattie to take, particularly after her long silence. Don't forget that what is hard for one is not so hard for another. Those who are by nature courageous cannot easily put themselves in the position of those who are timid. You have all been

so magnanimous in keeping the poor girl's secret, I am sure it is hardly necessary to remind you to support her now by kindness and sympathy. Try to feel toward her as you felt before this unhappy affair. You may be sure she will never offend in the same way again."

"If Alan can forget it, I should say it was a pity if we could n't," said George, frankly. "He is the only one who has been injured."

"She must have suffered all this time, though she kept it to herself," said Harry.

"Her suffering is not by any means ended," replied Mrs. Norton, "although it will be of a different kind. It will not be easy for her to break this to her parents and tell them she is expelled from the High School."

"Why, is she expelled from school?" asked one of the girls in surprise.

"Certainly she is. Alan was expelled in her place, and now that she has exonerated him she must suffer the penalty herself."

"Well, that is hard. I did n't think of it in that light."

"Here comes Alan alone," exclaimed Mrs. Norton. "Why, why did n't Hattie come with you, Alan?" she asked, as he joined them.

"I couldn't make her come," said Alan. "She said she would be here in a few minutes."

"This will never do," said Mrs. Norton, decidedly. "The longer she puts it off the harder it will be."

"So I told her."

"I shall have to go and bring her. You all begin dinner without us, it will be less embarrassing for Hattie;" and away went the chaperon once more. In a few minutes they saw her returning, having Hattie's arm securely locked in hers, as if she feared the poor girl's courage might desert her at the last moment.

"Goggles is the only one of us who has an easy conscience in the matter," said George, "and consequently the only one who can act in an unembarrassed manner. Go and meet them, old boy!"

"I think we ought to show her that we have n't any ill-feeling toward her," said Anna. "Why not go and meet her? We have n't been any too kind to her."

"I agree with you," said Sue, promptly. "Come, girls!"

Preceded by the genial Goggles, who seemed to take in the situation, the girls went in a body to meet their companion.

"We are glad to see you, dear Hattie," said Anna, warmly kissing her. "Everything is just as it used to be, and we will all be happy together."

Hattie was so kissed and embraced by her girl friends that Alan began to fear that this added happiness would bring on another crying fit, and he was agreeably disappointed at seeing her take her place at the table with a beaming countenance.

"Children," said George, in order to create a diversion, "Kate was remarking a few moments ago that it was a pity we had n't caught a few oysters, they would be so nice for dinner."

"I didn't say *caught*, I said *picked*, and you know I intended to say *picked up*. Now, what is there so very ridiculous in that?" she asked, as she looked about her and saw the amusement that was created at her expense.

"It sounded so funny," said one of the girls, "just as if they grew on trees and you had to pick them off."

"I don't see that it does. If you don't pick them up, what do you do to them? You tell me, Captain Higgins," she added, as the captain and Mr. Stearns appeared. "What do they do when they want oysters?"

"I guess they generally dig them," replied the captain, in his usual evasive manner. "I guess you won't find many around here, though, because it's always high tide here."

"If they had shovels long enough, I suppose they could, could n't they?"

"They would n't be very likely to if there was n't any oyster-beds here."

"Oh, I never thought of that! The oysters would naturally choose places where it was sometimes low tide."

"Of course they would," replied George, seriously. "What are you laughing at, children? Didn't you give the oysters credit for having any natural instinct?"

"You need n't pretend to agree with me," said Kate, "because I can see you are all trying to make me appear ridiculous, though I don't see what I have said that is so dreadfully funny as you all seem to think."

"He is just guying you, Kate," said Harry. "You must n't believe him. Oysters don't dig their own holes as he is trying to make you think. They have to be planted."

"That is a likely story! Just about as true as it is that that kind of squealing noise I heard a little while ago was made by the clams at high tide, as you told me."

"If you don't believe oysters are planted, you can ask Mr. Stearns," replied Harry. "He will not mislead you."

"Yes, they are," replied the teacher, as Kate appealed to him. "They are planted or thrown down in beds, and trees are stuck in the mud to mark the beds and catch the spawn. Much of it, as it is, must be lost."

"Do the oysters grow, then?" asked one of the girls.

"Certainly they do, but very slowly."

So kindly was the feeling now toward Hattie, that each one took pains to draw her into the general conversation, and before long she found herself on the old footing with her companions. Their consideration deeply touched her, and in the joy of being received among them on the old terms she quite lost sight of the fact that she was no longer a member of the Harbortown High-School.

They sat long over the dinner, and strolled about the island until the sun was nearly ready to set. Then they were transferred to the sloop, the empty baskets and dishes stowed away in the little cabin, and they headed for the camp. As the chaperon

from her seat in the stern watched the happy faces and listened to the light-hearted laughter and joyous voices of her young charges, noting that no face was happier and no laughter more joyous than Hattie's, it would have been hard to say whose hearts were the lightest, that of the chaperon or those of the young people in whose experiences she took such a deep interest.

## CHAPTER TWENTIETH



HE reaction from the state of depression into which Hattie's course of deception had thrown her was naturally the other extreme, and her change of mood imparted an influence to all. Not a vestige of the resentment they bore her previous to her act of atonement remained, and a condition of perfect harmony prevailed.

"If it were only that this unfortunate affair had been brought to a happy termination, I should feel paid for all the cares this summer camp has cost me," remarked Mrs. Arnold to her daughter, as they watched the happy group assembled in the shade of the grove one warm afternoon. "I can't tell you what a satisfaction it is to look at Hattie's happy face, and contrast it with the

sad look she had before our picnic to Swallow Island."

"So it is to me. I feel, too, that this episode in her life will have a good effect on her character."

"It must have. No one can suffer without some compensation. You may be sure she will never offend again in that way."

"No, the lesson was a hard one; but I have noticed that she has grown much more considerate of the feelings of other people. I overheard one of the girls saying the other day, 'Hattie doesn't boast as she used to.' It used to trouble me to see that spirit in her."

"Mrs. Arnold and Mrs. Norton," called out Sue Scudder, "will you help us out of a quandary? We want to wind up our vacation with a festivity of some kind, but we can't decide on any."

"What, for instance? A dance or picnic?" asked Mrs. Norton, as she and her mother drew near the group, and seated themselves on the bench the boys drew in the shade for them.

"We've had plenty of dancing, and it's getting late in the season for picnics," replied Anna.

"I will tell you what has just occurred to me," said her mother. "The village people have taken great interest in our camp, and have shown much delicacy of feeling in not obtruding themselves upon us, although I know their curiosity must be greatly exercised. Why not have a festival that will take them in?"

"A capital idea!" exclaimed George. "Nobody but you, Mrs. Arnold, would have thought of it. It would give them ever so much pleasure."

"And the pleasure of seeing them enjoy themselves would give you as much enjoyment as it will them."

"How would an exhibition of fireworks do?" asked Harry.

"It might be a cold evening, and the old people would get rheumatism," replied his mother. "It is late in the season, you know, and we have been driven indoors the last few

evenings. Some indoor entertainment would be best, I should say."

"What can be the meaning of that procession of people?" called out Alan, suddenly. "I saw them crossing over the mill-dam a few minutes ago, and now they are heading for us, I do believe."

"They certainly are," said George, as they now descried what seemed to be a procession of the village people of all ages, coming down the road that led to the camp.

"Perhaps their curiosity got the better of them, and they have come to investigate the premises," said Anna. "It is amusing to hear the questions they ask. They don't seem to understand the relation of things at all."

"They seemed at first to be under the impression that Mrs. Arnold had started a boarding-house," said one of the girls. "Old Mrs. Hitchcock asked me if we didn't have to pay an awful high board."

"They are all carrying baskets or tin pails," said another. "I believe they intend to have a picnic here. What a strange idea!"

The procession came nearer and nearer, and made straight for the grove where the members of the camp were seated. Foremost in the procession were the tradespeople of the town; and as they halted before the two ladies, the village baker, making a polite salutation, spoke thus with some embarrassment of manner, —

“ You have given us considerable custom this summer, and the young folks have been pretty lavish in spending their money among us, and we got together and talked the matter over as to how we could best show our appreciation. We come to the conclusion that a surprise party would be about the best thing. The children got wind of the affair and wanted to chip in, so here we be.”

“ You are all welcome,” said Mrs. Arnold, in her gracious manner, “ and we are much gratified that you should remember us so kindly. Now, if you will leave your baskets in the dining-hall, we shall be glad to show you about the place. My son will lead you to the dining-hall.”

Preceded by Harry, the company flocked to the dining-hall and deposited their baskets and tin pails on the long table. Then they looked about them with curious eyes.

"Well, I declare, if they haven't got a pianner here," exclaimed old Mrs. Hitchcock to her neighbor, "and graven images too," she added as she caught sight of a large bas-relief that hung over that instrument.

"Your mother must have gone to a sight of expense to fix up this place," said one of the village storekeepers. "I should n't think she'd expect to get back her money."

"I don't believe she does," replied Harry.

"These matched hard floors come high. Why, you could dance on it first-rate. I wonder if your mother would let us hire it for our assemblies next winter. We could n't afford to pay much, but perhaps she would n't mind getting a little interest on her money."

"Land sakes! it's as slippery as glass," exclaimed old Mrs. Hitchcock, as one foot slipped from under her, and after catching wildly at her neighbor, Sarah Page, for sup-

port, both suddenly found themselves seated on the floor with their feet straight out before them. Sarah Page, a most amiable spinster, finding that neither was hurt, took the affair as a joke, and remarked cheerfully:

“Well, I ain’t been sliding for a good many years, and I’d forgotten how it seemed to be upset, but I declare it all comes back to me.”

“Well, I’m glad you did n’t hurt yourself,” said one of the village storekeepers, as he gallantly assisted her to regain her feet. “You fell in just the right way to save your bones. I guess you see a few stars, though, did n’t you?”

“I did see a constellation or two. How is it with you, Mis’ Hitchcock?”

“Dear me!” exclaimed that lady, as she sat with her eyes closed and making no effort to rise to her feet, while somebody tugged at each arm. “If there’s a whole bone left in my body, it’s a wonder. Oh!” she screamed, as they made another effort to start her, “you’ll pull my arms out of the sockets.”

“Nonsense!” exclaimed plain-spoken Sarah Page; “it could n’t have hurt you a mite, except, perhaps, to give you a flesh bruise or two. You can’t expect ‘em to haul you onto your feet if you don’t try to help yourself. Give a little spring when they haul on your arms, and they ’ll h’ist you up before you know it.”

“Oh yes, you are a zephyr and sit on a twig, but I’m solid flesh and blood, and I hain’t got much spring in me.”

“You’ve got enough spring to get you up if you’ve only a mind to use it. Come, Mis’ Hitchcock, don’t spoil all our fun at the start. We don’t have a surprise party every day.”

“That’s always the way, I’m always a bugbear to all my friends. If I was only out of the way, all would go as slick as a whistle. Don’t you mind *me*. You keep on and have a good time without me. *I* don’t want to spoil *your* fun.”

“Now look here, Mis’ Hitchcock,” said Sarah Page, “you know you are just work-

ing yourself into the hystericks as fast as ever you can. Do you s'pose we are going off to leave you sitting bolt upright on the floor here? I should n't think you'd want to make a spectacle of yourself."

At this Mrs. Hitchcock's feelings over-powered her, and she burst into a fit of weeping which was interspersed with ejaculations bewailing her hard fate and forlorn condition.

All this time the young people had looked on with a feeling of amusement which they took care to conceal, but the situation was now becoming embarrassing and threatened to throw a damper over the spirits of the members of the surprise party. The boys held a consultation over the matter, as they stood on the outskirts of the party that surrounded the prostrate woman.

"I knew she would manage to get up something to divert all the attention to herself," said Harry. "I wish she had stayed at home."

"If we could only rig up a derrick," said

Alan, "we might start her, but, unfortunately, we have n't any."

"Let somebody yell fire," said another. "I'll wager she would be the first one out of the building."

"I see that the only way to start her up is to fall in with her," said strategic George. "We must sympathize with her, and then all take hold and set her on her feet."

"You will have to do the talking," said Alan, "because you have a way with you that they all like, and we will help hoist."

"Come on, then," replied George. "It's a shame to let her cheat these people out of so much of their pleasure."

He led the way to the end of the hall where Mrs. Hitchcock, now well under way in the fit of "hystericks," Sarah Page had predicted, had succeeded in reducing her companions to a low state of mind that was very gratifying to her feelings. Putting as much sympathy into his pleasant voice and attractive face as he could summon, he said persuasively, —

"It's an awful shame you had such a fall, Mrs. Hitchcock. I'm afraid you're seriously injured."

"Oh no, it isn't worth mentioning! Ask Sarah Page! She'll tell you how I feel. She knows a good deal more than I do about it," replied Mrs. Hitchcock, with great asperity.

"It is impossible for you to fall in that way without hurting yourself," continued George; "but it will not do for you to sit here. We will get you up and put you on one of the beds. Here, boys, you put your hands under that arm, and I'll manage this, and we'll have her up just as easy!"

Almost before she knew what had happened to her, she found herself seated in an armchair that stood near by. It was so easily done that she felt she had lost a golden opportunity, for she had not found time to give expression to the pain of being moved.

"There you be, as spry as a kitten!" exclaimed the baker, cheerfully. It was an unfortunate remark, and had the effect of bringing on symptoms of another fit of

“hystericks,” which George tactfully prevented by saying,—

“Now, Harry, you show them all around, and Alan and I will carry poor Mrs. Hitchcock across to the camp. She ought to rest after such an accident.”

Harry at once complied, and the surprise party did not wait for a second invitation to follow.

“Now, Mrs. Hitchcock,” said George, “we will make an armchair, and all you’ve got to do is to put an arm around the neck of each of us, and the first thing you know you’ll find yourself lying on a comfortable bed. Be careful to keep steady, Alan, because she might get frightened, and,” he added for Alan’s ear alone, “then she might jump down and walk.”

“All right,” responded Alan cheerfully, as he placed his hands in the required position.

“You don’t expect I’m goin’ to get onto such a tittlish seat as that, I hope!” exclaimed Mrs. Hitchcock.

“Why not?” asked George, soothingly.

"If you prefer, we will carry you in the arm-chair. Come, Alan, take hold!"

Before she could remonstrate, both seized the armchair, and raising it, took a few steps toward the door.

"Stop!" cried Mrs. Hitchcock. "Put me down! You'll upset me!"

"We sha'n't if you hold on to the sides of the chair and sit still," replied George. "You can't sit here, you know. They'll want the dining-room to set the table pretty soon. Besides, you ought to lie down."

Now this was just what Mrs. Hitchcock did not want to do, but it would not do to give in so easily.

"Well, I'll keep as still as I can, but you must n't let the chair wobble about so."

"We will go as steady as a yoke of oxen," replied George. "Come, Alan, try again."

Once more they started, and succeeded in passing through the door in safety; but they had not taken many steps beyond when the chair began to waver once more, notwithstanding the shrieks and protestations of the

occupant, who became so thoroughly alarmed that she suddenly jumped to the ground, and walked with great alacrity to a bench that stood near.

"Dear me! I'm all shook up," she exclaimed, as she sank back in an exhausted condition; "I should think you might have gone a little steadier."

"You see, it is pretty hard to carry anybody in a chair," replied George. "We would have carried you more steadily if you'd allowed us to make a chair of our hands, as we wanted to. Suppose we try again."

"No, I ain't going a mite further. I intend to set here till I get rested and find out how much damage has been done. Don't you mind me! You go with the others and enjoy yourselves. I might have knowed something would come up to spile my afternoon."

"You must n't think that way about it," said George, kindly. "You just sit quietly here for a while, and by the time the spread is ready perhaps you will feel well enough to go into the hall and have some."

“ You don’t catch me inside that slippery place again, I can tell you.”

“ Then we’ll bring your supper out here to you. I’ll get some cushions and make you as comfortable as possible ; ” and he disappeared, soon returning with an armful of cushions that he carefully placed about his charge.

“ Thank you,” she said, not able to wholly resist the good-natured attempt to make her comfortable. “ I dare say I shall feel better if I keep still a spell.”

“ Of course you will. Come, Alan, we’ll leave her to rest quietly here.”

When they joined the group, who were then inspecting the parlor, they were accosted by Sarah Page, who exclaimed, —

“ Well, you done well to get her up, I must say. How did you manage to do it ? ”

“ She thought we were going to let her drop, so she got frightened and jumped down,” replied George.

“ I suppose you tried hard not to tip her a mite,” said Sarah Page, much amused. “ I

thought she 'd come around before tea-time. She walked over here just as spry as any of us. I knew she could n't be hurt any."

" Except in her feelings," responded George. " She 'll come out all right before long."

" I should have thought Mis' Arnold would have had a better-looking fireplace in such a nice room as this is," remarked one of the villagers in a low tone to a friend, as they stood before the fireplace built of cobblestones. " I don't believe 't would have cost any more to have had it built of nice face brick."

" Perhaps it 's a new style that has come in lately," replied the friend. " We don't get the fashions up here as quick as they do in the city."

" Them white muslin curtains looped up with ribbons are real tasty," said the other, " but I should have most thought she 'd have had lace ones in her parlor."

" They say mats are all the fashion, but to my taste a nice Brussels carpet would look a good deal better."

“ ’T would cost a sight to put a real Brussels carpet down in this big room. A tapestry or a good three-ply would answer the purpose.”

“ So ’t would. Mis’ Arnold ain’t a mite backward in laying out her money, so I suppose she got these mats because she liked the looks of ’em. Tastes differ, you know.”

“ Do you see them flimsy-looking shades to those lamps? All lace and silk. S’pose they should catch on fire.”

“ Perhaps they ’re only made to look at. It ’s most likely they take ’em off and put on other ones when they light up.”

“ I don’t believe they do. Captain Burnham said he come over here one evening on business, and there was a lot of lamps with real fanciful shades onto ’em, that made it look just like a theatre.”

“ Well, all I can say is, I should want to carry a pretty heavy insurance if I used ’em.”

Everything was inspected by the curious visitors, and the time passed so agreeably

that before they dreamed that the afternoon was half gone, the notes of Fritz's bugle rang out on the air.

"Don't that trumpet sound pretty?" asked one, as Fritz was seen standing in front of the dining-hall, sending forth his supper call with his martial air. "Why, he's quite a musician, ain't he?"

"That is our call to supper," said Mrs. Arnold. "Will you all come in and enjoy the good things you have brought with you?"

"I did n't think it was anywhere near tea-time," said Sarah Page. "The afternoon has just flown."

As they entered the dining-hall, the party encountered Goggles and the puppy, who always appeared at the first notes of the bugle-call. "My! ain't he a pretty pup?" exclaimed Sarah Page, as the long-legged Stilts came to meet them with a very demonstrative welcome. "He looks real clever, does n't he?"

As Goggles came forward in his most gra-

cious manner, she drew back alarmed, saying: "He's real savage-looking, ain't he? Will he bite?"

"No, indeed," replied Mrs. Arnold; "he's the best-natured creature in the world."

"He's plain-looking, but come to see him closer he's got real clever eyes."

The table was set out with the contents of the baskets and pails, and a great variety was presented. Comfortably seated in an armchair at the head of the table was Mrs. Hitchcock, all traces of her recent ill-humor being dispelled by the sight of the tempting food before her.

"Don't make any reference to her accident, or she'll go through with it all again, just to show us she was more hurt than we thought she was," whispered Sarah Page to George Graham, who was escorting her to a comfortable seat. "And to think she was hove out of the chair! Do you s'pose she suspicioned it was done a purpose?"

"How could she?" responded George, not quite able to conceal the twinkle that came

so readily to his eyes. "Why, we went just as carefully as we could!"

"Oh, yes, of course you did! You wouldn't have scared her for the world, because she might have forgot all about her pains and walked off as well as ever!"

"Now what shall I bring you first? A slice of that delicious-looking ham all stuck over with tacks?"

"Well, I guess not, seeing as how I fetched it myself! As it happens, they ain't tacks; they're cloves. I guess you ain't so green as you make out, though."

"Well, then, how would you like a slice of that tongue?"

"I don't care if I do. Susan Capen fetched that. She don't usually boil her tongues long enough to suit me, but that seems to be more tender than common. You might get me one of Mis' Dr. Emerson's cream-of-tartar biscuits over in that blue platter if you've a mind to. She always has good luck with 'em."

The members of the S. I. Society waited

on their visitors until all were served, and then helped themselves. Every one had contributed generously, and the hearty appetites of the party did full justice to the appetizing food. A large platter piled high with "nut-cakes" disappeared as if by magic, and apple-pies and tarts filled with quivering "currant jell" were in great demand. Plate after plate of every variety of cake that country people know so well how to make was emptied and replenished from the generous supply donated. Mr. Brewster, who kept the candy store, had not allowed himself to be outdone, and a lavish supply from his stock was the result. Mrs. Arnold was not unmindful of the liking of her visitors for "hot drink," and tea and coffee were provided for the adult members of the company, while the young people and children regaled themselves on lemonade. No one of the visitors enjoyed her repast more than old Mrs. Hitchcock, whom the boys took care to provide with her favorite food.

After supper was over, the whole party

repaired to the camp parlor and passed an hour very agreeably in conversation, after which they prepared to depart, for country people keep early hours. Mrs. Arnold sent Mrs. Hitchcock and Sarah Page home in her carriage, they being the oldest members of the company, and all departed with expressions of gratitude for the happy reception they had received. "We are the ones in your debt," Mrs. Arnold had graciously responded, "and you have given us a delightful surprise with which to wind up our summer."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST



ON the excitement of closing the camp began, and all was bustle and confusion. Much as the young people regretted that their out-of-door life of freedom had come to an end, they were ready to return to their homes and resume their school life. The approach of summer brings with it a desire to disperse, as if in search of greater breathing-space; but as cold weather steals on, we instinctively draw together for closer companionship. Yet it was with a feeling of sadness that the members of the summer camp saw the buildings dismantled and made secure for the coming winter season. There is nothing that gives a greater sense of loneliness than an empty house, and when draperies and rugs were taken down and the beds stripped of their

belongings, all were ready to go. Goggles, of course, understood what was going on, but the puppy evidently considered the commotion of packing instituted for his sole amusement, and seized upon every stray article that came in his way and dragged it to a place of concealment, where he worried it to his heart's content. Several small rugs were thus ruined beyond repair, and many yards of the pretty ribbon used in tying back the white muslin curtains were hopelessly chewed and torn. Not content with this, he took advantage of the confusion to steal to the village on a tour of inspection, and was returned about five minutes before it was time for the train to leave.

Now that their faces were turned homeward, the members of the S. I. Society seemed as glad to go as they had been to come. Only one among them had a feeling of regret as she anticipated the home meeting. That one was Hattie Haynes, who had before her the unpleasant task of an-

nouncing to her parents the fact that she was expelled from the High School. Yet in spite of the ordeal before her, Hattie's heart was lighter than it was when she left home, for she carried with her the approval and support of her fellow pupils.

She broke the news to her mother,—that refuge for all girls. Her mother's first question was, "What will your father say?" It was the same query that had occurred to Hattie, for her father was an austere man, proud of his wealth and standing, who would feel keenly the disgrace of this publicity. Her mother, as mothers always do, undertook to be mediator between father and daughter, thus saving Hattie much anxiety and suffering. The disclosure drew from the father a torrent of indignation and reproach, and he immediately wished to see the teacher, in order to call him to account for his audacity in presuming to expel from school one who bore his name. Giving way to an angry impulse, he sought Mr. Stearns, and in vehement terms gave

expression to his indignation. So unjust were the reflections he cast on the teacher's conduct, that the latter became somewhat nettled, and informed the irate parent that his daughter had allowed an innocent pupil to suffer the penalty which should have been borne by her and had only confessed her fault at a late hour.

This explanation did not tend to soften the state of the father's mind, and on his return home he upbraided his daughter for her conduct in such harsh terms that the poor girl felt she had committed an unpardonable sin. As her father, in his wounded pride, continued to treat her as if she had disgraced her name and family, she became melancholy and reserved, avoiding the society of her old friends and hardly venturing out of doors, until her cheeks lost their former rosy color and a look of sadness took the place of her naturally vivacious expression.

This change did not fail to attract the attention of her former schoolmates. Even the boys saw it and felt great compassion for

her, but thought of no means of righting the matter. The girls, however, at Anna Arnold's suggestion, held an indignation meeting at which the question was discussed in all its bearings.

"I, for one, can't take any pleasure in going to school so long as Hattie's seat is empty. The poor girl is made to feel like a criminal at home, and any one can see she is perfectly wretched," said Anna.

"I was never so very fond of her," said another, "but since she has confessed I think it is mean to keep reminding her of what she has done, the way her father does."

"She did all she could to atone for her fault, and that is all any of us can do," said Sue Scudder.

"I tell you what we must do, girls," said Anna. "We must go to Mr. Stearns and ask him to let Hattie come back. He must see that she has been punished enough."

"That seems to be all we can do," said Sue. "You will have to be the one to engineer the matter."

“I don’t know why.”

“Because you have a plausible way with you that takes people in the right way. I should probably spoil matters by saying the wrong thing.”

“Nonsense! There is nothing to say but to state the plain case. I don’t mind going, but I don’t care to go alone.”

“Suppose we draw lots to see who will be the second party,” said Kate Lawson. “We will write each girl’s name on a slip of paper, and Anna shall draw.”

This plan was agreed upon, and Mary Mason’s name was the one drawn.

“Mary is just the right one!” exclaimed Sue. “She has more tact than most of us, myself included, and will not be led into expressing her opinion when she ought to be silent.”

“When will you see Mr. Stearns?” asked one.

“The sooner the better,” replied Anna. “To use my favorite proverb, taken from the Portuguese Grammar, we will ‘take occasion

by the hairs,' — which is supposed to be a literal translation of 'take time by the forelock,' — and go this very afternoon."

"I am glad of it," said Mary, "for if it were put off too long my courage might give out."

"Why, you will have nothing to do but sit by and 'look pleasant,' as the photographers say," said Sue. "Anna will do all the talking."

That afternoon the two girls presented themselves at Mr. Stearns's house and were ushered into his parlor, where he at once joined them.

"We have come to ask a very great favor of you, Mr. Stearns," said Anna, proceeding at once to the subject.

"What is it? I hope I shall be able to grant it," replied Mr. Stearns, thinking the request must be for a holiday or early dismissal of school, and wondering that such a demand should be made so early in the term. "You can hardly be tired of school so soon after your long vacation, I should imagine."

“Indeed we are not ! That is just it. We are all so happy together that it makes us feel very sad to know that one of the scholars is left out of our pleasure, so we all decided that we would ask you to take her back.”

“Miss Haynes has nobody but herself to blame for this state of affairs,” replied Mr. Stearns, coldly, for, at mention of her, his recent interview with his discharged pupil’s father rose to his mind, and the vehement language that was addressed to him on that occasion did not tend to soften his feelings. “She wilfully disobeyed one of the rules, and must take the consequences.”

“Oh, Mr. Stearns, she has taken the consequences, and hard ones they were too ! She is not so courageous as most people, and she could not muster the resolution to confess at first. Then we were very disagreeable to her, and treated her as if she had done the meanest thing on the face of the earth. We were not one bit charitable, and that made her feel hard to us and determined not to give in.”

“What is the use of rules if I am expected to make exceptions in every case? This would be establishing a bad precedent, Miss Arnold.”

“This is an unusual case,” replied Anna warmly, her sympathetic nature now wholly aroused. “I have done just as bad things as Hattie did, and so have others, I dare say, but we didn’t have to suffer so for them. Just think, Mr. Stearns, what it must be for that poor girl to have to endure the reproaches of her father after all she has undergone through the summer! You have no idea how violent he can be when he considers his dignity assailed.”

Mr. Stearns thought that he could estimate pretty correctly the extent to which Mr. Haynes might carry his sense of wounded pride, but he made no reply, and Anna continued her plea.

“I don’t believe, Mr. Stearns, you can fully understand that Hattie didn’t really mean to do anything very bad when she threw that note. I know you must have been such a good scholar and so interested in your studies

that you did n't do such foolish things as we do. You see, we were all excited over the prospect of our camp life, and we almost lost our heads. It must have been dreadfully hard for Hattie to confess to you and to Alan, but she could n't do any more, could she? She says her father intends to send her away from home to a large boarding-school, and I know that when she gets there she will not care what she does, and it will just spoil her."

Mr. Stearns made no reply for a moment, as he watched the expressive face of the young girl who was pleading so generously for her schoolmate and who had unconsciously touched a chord in his heart that had lain dormant for many years. When she said "I know you must have been so interested in your studies that you did not do such foolish things as we do," an episode in his school life in which he was the principal actor arose before his mind with startling accuracy. With it came the remembrance of the wise and kind treatment he had re-

ceived from his teacher, which he always believed had caused a turning-point in his career. Should he be less lenient to one who had committed no greater offence than that of which he had been guilty? Should he allow the girl to be sent to a fashionable boarding-school when a word of his could keep her with the companions that had been hers from infancy and whose frank natures and unaffected manners would set the best example she could have?

“The act of receiving Miss Haynes back as a pupil does not rest with me alone,” he replied at length. “When I expelled her from school, I naturally had to give an account of the affair to the school board. I will lay the case before them, and I do not hesitate to say that I sincerely hope they will approve of my recalling my decision, on account of the extenuating circumstances.”

“Oh, thank you, Mr. Stearns!” exclaimed Anna, enthusiastically. “We shall all be so glad, shall we not, Mary?”

"Yes, indeed," replied Mary, who had been a silent listener, rapt in wonder at Anna's eloquence, as she realized that she never could have brought about such a change in the situation of affairs. "We none of us can feel happy until Hattie is back in school. The boys feel just as we do about it."

When a few days later Anna received a note from Mr. Stearns, stating that the school committee had decided to reinstate the recently expelled pupil, her delight was so great that, after communicating the good news to the members of her family, she flew from house to house of her girl friends to carry the glad tidings to them. The result was an informal meeting of the S. I. Society in which to decide the best means of acquainting Hattie with the contents of the paper and at the same time expressing their own gratification and sympathy.

"Why not give her a surprise party, just as the villagers gave us?" said George. "It would be more informal and less embarrassing for her, I should say."

"Would n't it work up her feelings too much to give her the note before us all?" asked Alan.

"It would make them work in the direction we want them to," replied George. "It could n't produce any sensation but that of pleasure."

"But you know she might be so affected as to cry," said Alan, recalling the scene on Swallow Island when Hattie confessed that she was crying because she was so glad. "Girls cry sometimes because they are happy."

"Suppose she does?" said George. "What should we care if she does, provided we know they are tears of joy?"

"I tell you what to do, Alan," said Harry. "You keep out of the way until the presentation scene is over, and then come in for the fun."

"Who will present the note?" asked Sue. "It seems to me most appropriate for Alan to do it."

"No, indeed!" replied Alan, quickly, "I could n't do it."

"I know why. You are afraid she will cry; you know you are, old chap. It is strange that such a plucky fellow should be afraid of a few tears, particularly those of pleasure," said George.

"I have an idea," said Anna. "Let Goggles present the note. It will make it less formal and easier for Hattie."

So it was decided that amiable Goggles should make the presentation, and preparations at once began for the event. Mrs. Haynes was apprised of the intended surprise party, and promised faithfully to keep the secret. "Only," she added, "you must allow me to prepare the entertainment. It will be the greatest pleasure I ever had, and I assure you that Hattie shall not have a suspicion of what is in store for her. You must let me do this, for it will be a very slight expression of the pleasure you have given me."

So it was decided that they were to assemble at an early hour the next evening at Anna Arnold's and proceed in a body to the house of their schoolmate Hattie.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND



T the appointed hour the young people assembled at the house of Anna and Harry Arnold, as agreed. Goggles, fresh from the bath, as white and sleek as only a white dog with black goggles can look, bore a placard on his broad chest, on which was inscribed "I use Snowflake Soap."

"Do you intend to have him wear the placard at the presentation scene?" asked Anna, as Goggles took a conspicuous position and looked about him, as if to see the effect he had produced.

"Oh, no, that was merely done as a preliminary, — a chromo thrown in, you know."

"He ought to have a bow for the occasion, and I have provided a beautiful one." She produced a broad ribbon of cherry satin, and tied it in a large bow under one ear.

"Isn't that stylish?" she asked, drawing back to make a critical inspection of her handiwork. "See how it brings out the effect of his goggles and beautiful brown eyes!"

Goggles looked like a victim about to be sacrificed on the altar of fashion, as he sat with his enormous bow standing stiff and straight under his left ear, and his most sentimental expression of countenance.

"I wish I could throw as much sentiment into my face as Goggles can," said Kate Lawson. "People would take me for a born poet if I could."

The note was tied with a narrow ribbon of the same shade as the bow, and given into George's care until the time for presenting it arrived. Then the party set out in a body for their destination.

As they approached the house, they perceived that there were no signs of preparation for the party, and they were much gratified that Mrs. Haynes had kept her promise of keeping their secret from her daughter. The

only indication of anything unusual going on was the glimpse they got of a wagon with the name of the leading caterer upon it. This was standing before the back door, and tubs with chopped ice that could only contain that favorite and festive viand, ice-cream, were standing on the doorsteps.

When they entered the wide hall, Hattie and her mother were seen sitting in everyday attire in their sitting-room. As they came filing in one after another, Hattie came forward to meet them, genuine surprise expressed in every feature.

“We thought we would come and pass the evening with you,” said Anna Arnold in explanation, as Hattie gazed in surprise at the number of her visitors.

“Go right upstairs and take off your wraps,” said Mrs. Haynes. “We are delighted to see you, although Hattie is too much taken by surprise to say so.”

They all trooped up the wide staircase, which they found suddenly lighted at their approach, and a maid stationed at the top to

direct them to the rooms assigned to them. "We had the hardest work to keep it from Miss Hattie," the maid announced to the girls, as she helped them with their wraps. "We had to do everything on the sly. The hardest thing was to get the musicians into the house without her suspecting it. They forgot that Mrs. Haynes told them to go around to the conservatory door and enter that way, and the first thing we knew they turned up at the front door, instruments and all. Miss Hattie caught sight of 'em, but we got her off the track by saying 't was a street band."

Just then the notes of an inspiring waltz were wafted up to them, and where is the girl or boy who can resist that call? Stray locks were hastily brushed into place and toilets hurriedly surveyed, so eager were they not to lose a strain of that enchanting music, for none of our boys and girls were so spoiled by festivities that their sense of enjoyment was blunted. In the hall outside the girls found the boys, with Goggles at

their head, holding in his mouth the gayly decked presentation note and waiting for the word to start, with the patience that only his kind possesses. "Goggles has had his instructions and knows just what to do," said George, while all the girls tried to caress the intelligent dog at the same time. "Alan, you can get behind me, and don't forget, children, to leave a clear passage for Alan in case Hattie sheds tears. I intended to bring a bottle of smelling salts to sustain him, but forgot it."

The only response to this speech was a friendly blow from Alan's strong arm which caused George to make a feint of falling backward, and Goggles to give a quick glance in Alan's direction to see if an affront were intended. Being reassured, his eyes resumed their usual benign expression, and the party, preceded by him, descended the stairs.

They found the long drawing-room brilliantly lighted, while the orchestra, stationed in the conservatory adjoining, played its most enlivening tunes. Goggles at once proceeded

to the end of the room, where Hattie and her mother stood, and a most dignified and distinguished appearance he presented, with his large bow in perfect order and his head erect, as if proud of the commission intrusted to him. His master followed him closely, and as he stopped before the two ladies, George spoke for him,—

“Goggles has requested me to state his sentiments for him, as you are probably not familiar with his tongue, and unfortunately it is the only one he speaks with any fluency. He takes pleasure in presenting this note, which expresses the sentiments of all the crowd. Hand it over, old boy!”

Goggles at once dropped the gayly decked note at Hattie’s feet, and his master picked it up and passed it on to Hattie. She opened it, glanced hastily at the contents, then handed it to her mother, exclaiming, “He has taken me back, mother! I’m so glad!” and immediately burst into tears.

Only those nearest him heard the groan Alan gave at this demonstration, for the





musicians at that moment happened to be playing one of Strauss's most entrancing waltzes. Hattie's expression of joy soon spent itself, and she was smiling through her tears before the music paused. Then her mother spoke for her,—

“I know Hattie would like to thank you for the sympathy and interest you have shown her throughout this unhappy affair, but you must take her gratitude for granted, as she can hardly find words to express all she feels. If you have not all of you read this note, perhaps you would like to hear it.”

“We should, if you will be so kind,” said George. “We have been told the contents, but few of us have seen the note.”

Whereupon Mrs. Haynes read,—

DEAR MISS ARNOLD,— It gives me pleasure to be able to write to you that the matter of Miss Haynes' dismissal from school has been discussed by the board, and they have decided that, on account of extenuating circumstances, and also partly at the earnest solicitation of her fellow pupils, she be reinstated.

Sincerely your friend,

RALPH STEARNS.

A spontaneous and enthusiastic clapping of hands followed the reading of this note, and all crowded around Hattie to express their pleasure and sympathy. Then the dancing began, and all the boys wanted to dance with Hattie, to show their kind will, so that she had never in her life before been in such demand. Before they realized how long they had been dancing, the doors of the dining-room were thrown open, and a sumptuous table, such as was seldom seen at the simple gatherings in Harbortown, met their eyes. To the good things before them the young people did full justice, and even Goggles was not forgotten. He had sat patiently waiting just outside the door, trying not to show how much he enjoyed the fragrant odors wafted to him. When all were replete and refused to be tempted further by their hospitable hostess, each one was presented with a box of choice confectionery as a memento of the happy occasion.

“As for Goggles, who made the presenta-

tion, I want the pleasure of presenting him with a souvenir collar," said Mrs. Haynes.

"He will be most proud and happy to wear it," replied Goggles' master.

Then followed more dancing, and after the final "Portland Fancy" with which the young people of Harbortown always wound up the evening, the orchestra played "Auld Lang Syne," the fresh young voices of the company ringing out so feelingly in the chorus of that heart-stirring melody that even the haughty nature of Mr. Haynes was touched, returning from his club while they were singing, his feelings softened as he listened. As for Goggles, his sympathies were so worked upon that, as the chorus came in for the last time, he could contain himself no longer, but broke forth into a prolonged and lugubrious howl that unfortunately was off the key and had the effect of bringing the voices to a stop before the song was ended. Perhaps this diversion was just as well, for all were so imbued with the plaintive sentiment of the song that

a saddened mood was stealing over the spirits of all, which this act on the part of Goggles dispelled. And as the merriment subsided, Mr. Haynes, who had greeted them most courteously, remarked, "After all, what is there to be sad about?" and all agreed with him.

It is hard to close, kind readers, — it would be such a pleasure to tell you more about the dear young people whose fortunes for one summer we have followed together — more about other summers passed at Sunset-Point Camp, and more High-School experiences. Also it would be a satisfaction to follow them all to manhood and womanhood, but that I must leave to your own imaginations. Before I close, however, I know you will like to have me mention the two humble friends who cannot speak for themselves. Stilts, I regret to say, turned out to be the irresponsible dog that his puppyhood promised. I cannot do better than quote the words of his faithful friend, Fritz: "That puppy is the most feelingless creature I ever have

seen." Such, I regret to say, was the case. Thirteen times the following winter he ran away from the beautiful home where he was so well cared for, and each time on his return evinced no satisfaction at seeing the kind friends who received him so affectionately.

Goggles, dear patient Goggles, on the contrary, ripened with declining years, and, if it were possible, endeared himself more to the hearts of his friends as time went on. He is quite an old dog now, and the once dark patches about his eyes that suggested his name are mixed with gray. He may often be seen sitting beside a tall young man with a bright, frank face, as they drive through the Boulevard, and in cold weather he is recognized by his warm, fur-lined blanket with its high storm-collar, made by his devoted friends, the girl members of the S. I. Society of Harbortown High School.



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